



SCARY 70TH TRIBUTE ISSUE FROM
THE BLACK LAGOON!

SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE™



**AN ACKERMONSTER
TRIBUTE MAGAZINE**



*Carte
FOA!*

SCARY 70TH TRIBUTE ISSUE FROM
THE BLACK LAGOON!

1955

SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE™



**AN ACKERMONSTER
TRIBUTE MAGAZINE**



Cartoon
FJA!

FOLD SIDE PANEL ON THIS LINE >

FOLD SIDE PANEL ON THIS LINE >

< FOLD SIDE PANEL ON THIS LINE

< FOLD GLUE FLAP ON THIS LINE

FOLD FLAP ON THIS LINE

FOLD FLAP ON THIS LINE

DR. ACULA
CANDY & TOY
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FOLD ALL FLAPS ON THIS LINE

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MEET MY PAL
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FORREST ACKERMAN

MONSTER PIN-UP No.10

Cut out & decorate your room!

GLUE FLAP

FOLD ALL FLAPS ON THIS LINE

FOLD ALL FLAPS ON THIS LINE

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(Left) Your very own *Pal Dr. Acula* on his own Phoenix Forry Tribute Candy Box created by Michael Scott!
 (Inside back cover) Your very own **THE CREATURE** Phoenix box!

SCARY Story: Way back in 1963 the Phoenix Candy Co. Inc. based in Brooklyn, New York created 5 Universal Monster Candy boxes. These very hard to find boxes included **DRACULA**, **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**, **WOLFMAN**, **THE MUMMY** and **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**. Non-sports card collectors sometimes refer to these boxes as **MONSTER PIN-UP** cards since the back portion of each box contained a Monster Pin-Up for you to cut out. Recreated versions of the original 5 boxes as well as several fantasy boxes like the Forry one created especially by Michael Scott for this issue and to pay tribute to Forrest J Ackerman can be found at www.universalmonsterarmy.com. Join the **UNIVERSAL MONSTER ARMY** and join fellow monster fans and share your Scary Stories, collections and monster knowledge.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCARY ASSEMBLING:

1. Detach these scary covers or make a color copy of these covers, or better yet join the Universal Monster Army and download the images and print them on your color printer. The image printed out should fill the full 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper to get the proper box size.
2. Locate some lightweight cardboard from a gift box or you could probably use the cardboard from a soda pop case. If you want the best vintage look you should probably locate some gray cardboard.
3. Glue your box image to the cardboard using a spray glue if possible for best results.
4. Carefully cut and trim out the box outline.
5. Score the fold lines with the blunt tip of your scissors so you get a nice clean fold (see photo).
6. Fold your box together and glue or use two sided tape on the glue flap for final assembling.



Some of the scary tools and material needed to assemble your box.



Carefully score the fold lines.



This is what your trimmed and scored box should look like before you assemble and glue the flap.



This is what your finished boxes should look like. You can also find a display box ready to print and assemble on the website. Now is this cool and scary or what?!

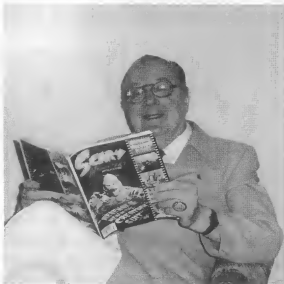


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www.universalmonsterarmy.com

**Special Scary Thanks to Michael Scott, Matt Jaycox,
 Terry Ingram and the Universal Monster Army!**



(Photos courtesy of Kooky Kent Daluga!)



*This Issue is
Ded-ack-ated
to the Ackerman himself
Forrest J Ackerman!*

*Thanks for the inspiration and
MONSTER MEMORIES!*

*I'd like to think he is somewhere reading
and making the same faces at this very
Scary Forry Tribute Issue!*

Forry can be seen in these photos reading about
Ben (THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON)
Chapman who this issue is also dedicated to.

SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE™



MONSTER MEMORIES of the ACKERMONSTER

Most people's first meeting with Forrest J Ackerman occurred in the pages of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** magazine or perhaps **MONSTER WORLD**. I'm no exception.

As related in my introduction to the *Terrifying Third Issue!* of **SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE**, the first issue I purchased of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** was issue #23. To that introduction I said the first issue I

saw of FM was #21 but I now believe it was probably #22 which now makes a little more sense. The covers were sort of similar. The issue marked the 5th Anniversary of the **FAMOUS MONSTERS**. Issue #22 was no longer available at the corner drugstore when I ran there after school to purchase my own copy. After that I kept an eye out for **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**. Come to think of it... It may have been the Colossal Beast's missing eye as seen on the Gogons cover of FM 23.



ACKERMONSTER

Today, I keep a beat-up copy of #23 in my office along with other reader copies of various vintage monster magazines for inspiration and relaxation for that extra special monster blast to the past.

When I first heard about Forry's death on the *Classic Horror Film Board* I thought about grabbing FM #23 to reminisce but decided on listening to music instead. When John Lennon was shot I couldn't listen to his music or The Beatles for years because of the sadness. Fortunately with Forry we sort of knew it was coming and he lived a long and fulfilling life so I can enjoy my vintage FMs and other Forry related memorabilia without that sadness.

As I write these words I have both FM #23 and another favorite, **MONSTER WORLD** #1 in front of me for inspiration. (Continued on the next page)

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A Real Monster Magazine!
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that were around. All of this would lead me to become a dealer at comic book shows and start selling things via mail order specializing in monster magazines. I started running classified ads for my catalog in CINEFANTASTIQUE, FILMFAK and THE COMIC BUYERS' GUIDE. In November of 1989 I would receive an envelope with a return address of the Ackerman Agency (International) with a blank Forrest J Ackerman letterhead inside and a stamp for my catalog enclosed. This was by *First Scary Close Encounter* with the Ackermosner. He didn't order anything from this catalog but has ordered things from me over the years.

Going back one year to 1988, Bob Michelucci would finally revise his 1977 COLLECTOR'S GUIDE TO MONSTER MAGAZINES as THE COLLECTOR'S GUIDE TO MONSTER, SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FILM MAGAZINES. Forrest J Ackerman of course had a featured article in the book entitled A DECADE OF DECAY & DECADENCE. Perhaps even more important, Bob's publishing company IMAGINE, INC. published the FORREST J ACKERMAN, FAMOUS MONSTER OF FILMLAND book in July 1986. These books would increase interest in Forrest J Ackerman and FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND magazine. Both books are highly recommended for Fory fans especially the FAMOUS

MONSTER OF FILMLAND book.

Things would really begin to ACKSplode towards the end of 1990 when Fory appeared on the first annual telecast of THE HORROR HALL OF FAME in late September and also receive an award statue he would quickly name the "Grimmy." The broadcast of this show brought many a monsterbaby-boomer to my mail order business in search of vintage

F A M O U S MONSTERS issues. The first issue of FORREST J



Fory reminisces about the first 50 issues of FAMOUS MONSTERS in this must-have book.

ACKERMAN'S MONSTERAMA magazine was also announced for a December 1990 release featuring the best of the first two issues of FM with new stills and some new articles.

MONSTERAMA #1 would finally appear in April 1991 as the monster world would reach an acker-explosion! Forrest J Ackerman's HOORAY FOR HORRORWOOD! VHS tape billed as *The Official Famous Monsters of Filmland Video* would also be released in 1991. The long-awaited and delayed FAMOUS MONSTER CHRONICLES book would finally come out in October of 1991. This book would feature a complete index to FAMOUS MONSTERS along with a ton of



My *First Scary Close Encounter* with the Ackermosner was this blank letterhead along with a stamp for one of my monster magazine catalogs.

FM and Fory memories by various fans and colleagues. October 1991 would also be the official release of the LIMITED COLLECTOR'S EDITION #1 of SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE which actually was printed in August of 1991. I would of course mail a copy to Fory. FORREST J ACKERMAN FAMOUS MONSTER OF FILMLAND book #2 would also finally come out in 1991. At least I think it did since on the inside of the book it says, "First Printing: October 1991."

My next Fory encounter would occur because of this book. In a letter sent on September 30, 1991 Fory would apologize for the 6 month delay. The complete letter is reproduced on the next page. Throughout this tribute you will read about Fory's generosity and kindness and the attached letter shows some of it. Sometime after receiving the letter I would receive signed copy #58 of the book. I would send Fory my check and

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Editor
Lecturer
Archivist
Researcher
Representative
Anthropologist
Actor



Editor
MONSTERAMA
Director
SCIENCE FICTION AGENCY
Founder
ACKERMANISM
FLESH
HBOO WINNER
TRIPLE WINNER
GEMMY WINNER
CLAMPETT WINNER
RASCALFIER WINNER
3 FOREIGN BRIGADES

10 Sep 91

Dear Long-Suffering Patient Person

About your order for FJA: FMOF #2. Believe me, this hurts me more than it hurts you. I was promised the completed work half a year ago. It still hasn't been delivered to me from the printer. The latest delivery date is "early November". I can't expect a couple hundred of you to wait any longer so, never having cashed any of the checks, I am returning all of them individually at a loss of about \$100 for copies like this, postage and storage time. Unless I hear from you to the contrary I'll assume you still want the book WHENEVER it finally exists and I will send you an inscribed copy on trust. You can send me a check when you receive it.

Faithfully

"UNCLE" FORRY

Uncle Forry's kindness shows through in this letter about the delay of FJA: FMOF #2.

inquire about and purchase a carton full of the books for resale. This being another of my Forry encounters.

1992 would bring more correspondences with "Uncle Forry" and his willingness to do an interview for SCARY MONSTERS #3 (June 1992). Our **TERRIFYING THIRD ISSUE!** would be of course be dedicated to Forrest J Ackerman and contain the interview entitled **THE ACKERMONSTER, FORREST J ACKERMAN**. In the interview Forry would say, "And, when the news breaks, there will be 3 days in 1993 that you will want to set aside for the most astounding star-studded imagi-movie event of the past 35 years!! You'll be telling your grandchildren about it in the 21st century!-unless you bring them along with you. A world-wide event of galactic proportions! On the last page of SM #3 an ad would appear for the Forrest J Ackerman's 35th Anniversary **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND WORLD CONVENTION**. I would go on to help Forry (actually Ray Forry) promote the upcoming convention by running free full page ads in all of our issues before the show. SCARY MONSTERS #5 (December 1992) would actually contain an interview with Ray Forry called the FM-CON '93

UPDATE. On March 1992, **MONSTERAMA #2** would finally appear almost a year after the first issue. The magazine was originally supposed to be on a quarterly schedule but only lasted two issues. It was a fun monster magazine and with its painted cover on the second issue and heavy pulp paper it



had a great feel to it and I as well as Forry at the time wished it would continue. The publisher had also announced a Forry basically stillustration book called **KING OF KONGS** but it never came out. A **FAMOUS MONSTERS** Calendar, as well as a number of card sets like **THE ACKERMONSTER CARDIACARDS** would also be released in 1992.

The anticipation would continue to build until "THE MONSTER-FAN EVENT OF LIFETIME!" finally happened on May 28-30, 1993 in Arlington Virginia. (For more info. SEE: SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE #8!) Many monster fans, myself included would meet Forry in person for the first time at this convention. While Kooky Kent would end up spending a lot of time with Forry the night before the convention into the wee hours of the night. (You will probably read about it a little in Kooky's tribute in this issue.) I was tired from getting ready for the show plus my son had been born about a month before the convention so I went to bed early on Thursday to get ready for the big day on Friday. So, I would only meet Forry a few times briefly during the show because I was tied to my dealer tables for most of the show. **FAMOUS MONSTERS #200** would debut at the show, 10 years after its original demise. Forry as well as all of his fans were in monster heaven for this fun weekend.

At the point, I'll opt to skip over any of the Forry and Forry story as well as my relations with the new publisher of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**. Forry would



BEAST WITCHES TO
DENNIS DRUKTENIS ~ #58
(FORREST)
Ackerman

leave the new FAMOUS MONSTERS over a dispute and that would be my next personal contact with him. I would phone him to wish him my "beast" and offered to publish his article that Ray had rejected but we'll talk about it later. I never pursued this issue and the article ended up being published in an issue of MONSTERSCENE. I would get Forry to provide an article on MONSTER WORLD for our History/Index/Price Guide to Monster Magazines Part 9 1/2 in SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE #21. Forry would until his passing provide columns to both CULT MOVIES when they were being published as well as SCARLET STREET and SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE. Forry's last CRIMSON CHRONICLES column appears in SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE #2 which recently came out.

In SM #22 we would start promoting the first MONSTER BASH and one of the events was Forry's East Coast 80th Birthday Party! I came up with the idea of doing a SCARY SPECIAL LIMITED MONSTER BASH EDITION celebrating 4E is 8E and the MONSTER BASH convention and ended up contacting Forry via regular mail with my idea of a limited edition post card inside the stickered magazine. Forry agreed and sent me a nice color photo for the limited edition postcard. We sold this limited edition at the price of a regular issue so fans had something special to have Forry sign during the BASH weekend. If I can recall correctly, I sent Forry No. 1 of 300 of this issue along with some extra postcards. I kept No. 80 and somehow managed to get Forry to sign the sticker and the postcard quickly during the convention. The dealer room for this first show was down in the basement of the hotel and the guests were on the first floor and I had no one to really watch my tables but fortunately I got my copy signed.

Ron Adams had some speakers lined up for the Forry 80th celebration but they ended up getting stuck at a local restaurant. I could see Ron looking around the room for speakers to keep the event going and knew what was going to happen soon. Fortunately he picked Richard Stoner to speak first but then picked me! I wouldn't have minded that much if I had something prepared but I didn't. So your Scared editor quickly ran up there and quickly said something about "Forry being my inspiration" and then bolted from the stage. A picture of this can be found in SCARY MONSTERS #25. After the show ended on Sunday Forry entered the elevator shortly before I was getting off and I said something like "There's the man of the weekend!" Later in one of his magazine columns he would mention what I said to him at MONSTER BASH.

During the ensuing year I would usually see Forry walking around the dealer room at MONSTER BASH



My personal copy NO. 80 of 300 of the limited edition SCARY MONSTERS #23 signed by Forrest J Ackerman at the first MONSTER BASH in 1997.

and would always hand him a copy of the latest issue of SCARY MONSTERS. One year, Forry found Ray Forry's oversized classic horror picture book and asked me to save it

for him until he made some money at the show. At that point I kind of felt sorry for Forry thinking about how Forry was capitalizing on things that Forry helped create and then cut Forry off. Forry did return to my tables later that weekend to purchase the book and I think I gave him a discounted price.

In early 1999 I contacted Forry regarding a couple of photos I had of him and Calvin Beck asking him if he remembered it. His comments and the photos appeared in CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN #26 which debuted at

"Which one is the 80-year-old Ackemonster?" -FJA at 80

Forrest J Ackerman



Card #1 of the number one fan of Sci-Fi/Horror and famous editor, Forrest J Ackerman is a SCARY SPECIAL LIMITED MONSTER BASH EDITION of only 1000 postcards

This collector Series-Card published by Distances Publishing/SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE under special arrangement with Forrest J Ackerman & MONSTER BASH. © 1997 by Forrest J Ackerman & Distances Publishing 300 Joseph St. Hollywood, IL 60640 FAX (312) 521-9878

The back side of my personal signed copy of the limited edition postcard at 70% of its original size.

MONSTER BASH 1999. One day after the dealer rooms had closed I was in the lobby near the registration desk and someone called me over to ask if Forry could have a copy of CoF #26. I had planned on giving him a copy but hadn't bumped into him yet. Of course, I said yes and Forry smiled. That entire evening Forry could be seen around the convention holding that copy of **CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN**. How cool was that! Over the years in photos you usually see Forry holding an issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** or one of his hooks. I wish I could have found a copy of the photo of Forry and CoF. Perhaps before this tribute is over it will turn up or he on someone's photo disc which I haven't looked at yet.

The last BASH I would see Forry at and talk to him was the 2006 **MONSTER BASH**. Forry and Joe Moe walked into my little personal dealer room I had at this particular show and I handed Forry our latest issue. He went on to tell my son, Dylan a joke about Oprah which we didn't really get but laughed at anyway. Joe would end up purchasing two original 1970s Warren posters of the **FAMOUS MONSTERS** cover #109 featuring Vincent Price. Joe told Forry he was going to hang up one at Forry's house and the other one at his house. It would be interesting to find out if the poster finally did end up on the wall on the mini-Ackermansion.

At some point maybe around 2001 I thought about how cool it might be to publish a one-shot magazine entitled **FORREST J ACKERMAN'S FRIGHTENING MONSTERS**. I could see the red background issue with the Ackermonger on the cover in my mind along with the logo. No one has ever been told about this idea, including Forry, until now.

I'm sure many of you sent your cards and notes to Forry during his last days but I couldn't decide what I wanted to do that was extra special. As mentioned last issue



"Which one is the 80-year-old Ackermonger?" -FJA at 80 on the front of the limited postcard created for SM #23.

Debbie Painter was able to deliver my personal "Beast Wishes" to Forry in person.



Many of you have **MONSTER MEMORIES** of visiting Forry and his Ackermansion. Sadly, I was never able to visit but have visited many times in shared photos and scary articles over the years. Even though I was personally invited a few times to Forry's annual birthday bashes, I was never able to attend. But, I was able to attend and celebrate in the numerous Forry birthday articles we have run over the years. Forry is a part of this magazine and an inspiration.

FORREST J ACKERMAN STILL LIVES!

Enjoy this *Very Scary Special Issue* devoted to the MAN who started it all!

BP



Dear SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE,

Make this the year that you send in your SCAREMAIL and MONSTER MEMORIES to:

DENNIS DRUKTENIS PUBLISHING & MAIL ORDER, INC.

348 Jocelyn Pl. Highwood, IL 60040

E-MAIL: Scaremail@aol.com www.scarymonstersmag.com



Dennis,

Another great issue. **BEAST FROM HAUNTED CAVE** is one of my favorite Corman flicks. So scary, the title alone would send a shiver down the back of most people. Those behind the scenes photos of the monster being built were very interesting. I had no idea the beast had such long pointy teeth! I can't say I liked the **SWAMP THING** sequel better than the first movie (I must have watched the first one a dozen times on HBO back in the 80's), but I **LOVED** the monster suit in the second one. As soon as I saw the mossy suit I wished it had been used in the first **SWAMP THING** as well. Really well done. I was lucky enough to guess the last **SECRET SCARY PHOTO**, this time I don't think I need any luck at all. It is **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN**. Zandor Vorkov gives it away. I'm thinking he is the only Dracula to ever wear an afro!!

Happy New Year!

CHRISTIAN SAMUEL, Acworth, GA

Dear Dennis,

So sorry to hear we lost Forry Ackerman. Horror film fandom will never be the same. He will be missed. I am sorry he didn't stick with **FAMOUS MONSTERS** magazine, all these years. I saw Forry in a few recent DVDs. He didn't look well.

It's hard to believe he will never attend another convention or write another article. I would like to see an entire issue of **SCARY MONSTERS** devoted to Forry.

RALPH COSTANTINO, Lorain, OH

Greetings Dennis:

Just received my issue #69...wow! The Terry Beatty cover art

is terrific, coming in at a close second to the memorable SM #64 Karloff/Mummy issue. (My favorite to date, and congratulations on the award for that particular issue). No doubt that this was the Lugosi version of the Frankenstein Monster. It was also giving credit to one of Bela's best performances, even if the script hindered what could have been a much better entry in the franchise. I still remember the first time I saw the movie as part of the Universal **SHOCK THEATRE** release package, and the memorable ending is still fresh in my mind.

The detailed coverage in this issue was quite enjoyable, especially pertaining to the scripting problems. The extended coverage of Lugosi, to include a rare peek at his scrapbooks, also gave a good insight to this great actor's life. The coverage of the Spook Show phenomenon is nostalgic for me—I was blessed to catch one of Dr. Silkini's shows, and it is still one of my best **MONSTER MEMORIES**. One of the best things about SM is the nostalgic coverage of many of the "players" from those great older fright films—please, keep up the good work. Your coverage of Jonathan Frid, Daniel Emery, and Chris Robinson in this issue is a good example of giving the well-deserved recognition to those beloved performers.

Godzilla and Barris custom cars in the same issue—what a broad palette of interesting attractions. I also look forward to the **Scare-reviews**, **SCARE-NEWS**, and **SCARY DVD HEADLINE GRUES** features which keep me up-to-date on the great things we can look forward to in the near future. All in all, an excellent, content-packed issue.

As we all are mourning the loss of FJA (and others, recently), I am looking forward to SM #70 as an appropriate "Tribute" issue. By the way, I also would like to comment on the issue of

"colorization." I understand there are many that don't like the idea. Personally, I think its terrific—I have some 3 Stooges with excellent colorized treatment. I also have the Alistair Sims **SCROOGE** DVD, which my wife and I enjoyed this past holiday season. I am seeing a lot more films being given the DVD/Blu Ray/digitalized treatment, with both the original B&W masterpieces, I believe this will open the floodgates. Imagine if Universal would agree to treating their classics—they really should consider **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN** as a "test" for this!!! My personal "dream wishes" would be for **THE THING**, **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS** and **DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL**.

Anyway, keep up the good work and I will continue to subscribe to this fine publication.

Sincerely,

"Monster Kid," **ROBT. (BOB) MORIN** Johnson City, TN

My only memory I have is the fact of me never meeting Forrest J Ackerman. I do remember getting my first issue, the 1965 yearbook of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**, from my uncle when I was 11. Then while reading (or more like looking at the pictures), I saw the name Forrest J Ackerman. I had to meet this man, and every time I have gotten an issue of **SCARY MONSTERS**, I would see his name on the guest list of the **MONSTER BASH**.

But, I was too young to go. And after the news, I don't know what hurt worse, the fact that he passed away, or I never met a legend. Now I feel insecure if I will ever meet my idols, Ray Harryhausen and Roger Corman being the big ones. Now in high school, I only have four issues of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**, and thought, as long as movies are shown and pieces of writing exist, these idols will never truly pass on. And more than that, the fans keep their spirits alive. Long live the **SCARY MONSTERS** living in Filmland.

Yours truly,

IAN BAUER

Hi,

The **SCARY SECRET PHOTO** of issue #69 is from **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN** and pictures the never to be forgotten "Forry" Ackerman and the never to be remembered Zandor Vorkov. While your next issue in remembrance of Forry will probably, and should, be the greatest tribute you've ever published, hopefully at least a few pages in it, or a future issue, can be devoted to Beverly Garland—A true "Scream Queen" of the 50's before the title was coined and a fine lady I had the pleasure of meeting at one of the Bashes. It does appear the list of vintage monster greats just keep getting regrettably smaller. Well, we still have Christopher Lee.

RICHARD LAMPHEAR

Dear Dennis,

It was bittersweet to recognize this issue's **SCARY SECRET PHOTO** as our late Forrest J Ackerman in **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN**.

The newspaper obits emphasized his editorial career, mentoring soon-to-be famous authors, and coining the phrase "sci-fi," but to kids from the late 1950s through the 1970s, Uncle Forry helmed the magazine they watched for at the local

drugstore or newsstand.

While not the serious publication he had envisioned, **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** brought joy and excitement and educated readers about a film genre then disdained by critics.

He preserved artifacts that might have been lost and generously shared them with fans at the Ackermansion. He contributed to films himself with some great cameo appearances. In later years, while readers were dealing with their own life challenges, he inspired us with his courage in facing illness, the loss of his beloved wife and the financial and legal issues surrounding his magazine. He left the world better for his presence here.

Fortunately for us, the spirit of imagination on which he treasured is carried on in the pages of **SCARY MONSTERS**.

Sincerely,

PAMELA CARON Portland, OR

Dear Mr. Druktenis,

It was with great sadness to hear that Forrest J Ackerman had passed away. Words cannot describe the loss. Mr. Ackerman, through **FAMOUS MONSTERS** magazine probably saved the monster film genre from falling into obscurity. "Forry" and "F.M." educated the fans, inspired future directors, make-up artists and animators and indirectly gave impetus to the Hollywood studios to continue producing monster as well as sci-fi movies after the early 1960's.

Forry was a pioneer in getting the word about not only monsters, but sci-fi, fantasy, and occasionally serials to the fans. He was the first. Hopefully, he's in a better place. The news about the upcoming **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** was most exciting. Hopefully it becomes a reality especially in spite of the current economic situation. Just remember Mr. Druktenis, that you're indirectly responsible for the new **FAMOUS MONSTERS** magazine. Your publication, **SCARY MONSTERS** preserved interest in all things monster when F.M. wasn't around. Your publication has the spirit of F.M. as well as **CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN** but carries their torches even further. You have listened to the memories of the fans. And let's face it, this "hobby" would be lost without its base. So give yourself a pat on the back for an job well done—you deserve it!

Sincerely,

WILLIAM MEZZANO Addison, IL

Dear Dennis Druktenis,

Please renew my subscription to **SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE**. I can't tell you how much I enjoy this magazine so very much—it brings me so much joy from childhood. I get a great nostalgic charge from really old fun old movies that you won't see today or even anymore.

Incredible joy! Please don't go out of business. I will miss these issues so much.

Sincerely,

BERNIE CASEY Bronx, NY

Hi Dennis!

I received the latest issue of **SM** a few days ago. John Scareshock's article was one of the best. I enjoy the information he shares regarding collectibles and other monster news. I particularly liked reading his thoughts about the

current status of FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND. This guy is a real asset to SCARY MONSTERS!

Although I don't have any personal experiences to share regarding Forry Ackerman, I am looking forward to what people have to say about 4E in the next issue of SM.

Thanks!

BILL ROBERTS Raymore, MO

Deennis,

I really enjoyed the Harry Wise story. I wish I could have seen one of his shows. The closest I ever came to a spook show is this: The Heights Theater in Columbia Heights Minnesota is an old theater (it is now the oldest longest continuous operated theater in Minnesota) that by the mid-90s had been let go thru neglect. Then two brothers bought it and started fixing it up (it is now a must-see showplace including an old organ that is played on frequent special events). They also started occasionally showing old movies. One Halloween season they had a triple feature of old hokey horror movies. I took my little daughter to the movie. To our surprise before the movies started, several "actors" dressed as a mad scientist and the Frankenstein Monster appeared in the alcoves and put on a little skit. They did the same thing between movies. At one point the top of Frankenstein's head came off. The actors joked about it and carried on. My daughter still remembers it!

This year at the Halloween season the same theater showed the original **HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL**. They rigged up a skeleton and, at the appropriate moments near the end of the movie, it soared over the crowd. The spotlight shining on it made it also appear on the screen. The crowd loved it of course. So much fun!

Keep up the good work and take care.

MIKE HUTCHISON Burnsville, MN

It was a quiet Tuesday night when I got a letter in the mail from a genre friend that Mr. Forrest J Ackerman had passed on. I stood in silence for a few minutes, a hit stunned, sure he was 92 years old. I know someday we all must die, but Forrest?, the man who in my younger days would always give us fans a touching nostalgic farewell to all the others who left this world. I said to myself he can't be dead, it took a few minutes till it got through to me that Forrest had left planet earth.

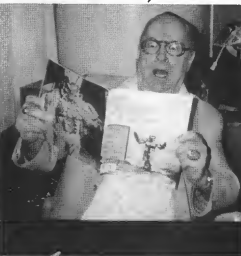
In 1964 I was walking into my local candy store and there I saw a magazine with a bright color drawing of something I had only seen on TV in black and white. I bought the magazine and I was hooked, pleasantly hooked. Yes Lon Chaney, and Universal Studios established the horror film genre, but no man ever led the Horror Sci-Fi parade like Mr. Ackerman did.

Wherever you are now Forrest, you have left us, but that parade shall go on. Let's remember Henry Hull's last line in **WEREWOLF OF LONDON** as he was dying, "in a little while I will know why this all had to be." Hopefully Forrest you know now what we all will know someday.

DAN SOMBER Rapid City, SD

Forrest J Ackerman meant more to me than he will every know. I got the opportunity to tell him this once, for which I am grateful. I was at the very first **MONSTER BASH**, held at the Ramada Inn in Ligonier, PA back in 1997, I believe. Forry was one of the guests, with the theme revolving around the classic monster stamps that the postal service was issuing at the

WANTED! More Scary Readers like:



Forrest J Ackerman

time.

As far as I was concerned, Forry was the **ONLY** guest that mattered. I had spent countless hours reading **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** magazine growing up, but never seemed to locate a neighborhood store that stocked the issues as they came out. So I would happen upon an issue here or there, every 5 or 6 months, and particularly loved the pictures. While **CREEPY**, **EERIE** and **VAMPIRELLA** were OK, they "just" had drawings, and not pictures. These other Warren titles seemed to have better distribution, however. I remember showing an issue of FM to some of the neighborhood kids when I was 7 or 8, and they were also extremely excited to see pictures in a magazine, having only seen issues of **CREEPY** or **EERIE** up to that point.

Growing up, it wasn't too long before I needed to have the back issues of FM that I had missed. At Christmas or my birthday, I'd always ask for FM back issues. By this time, I knew that Forry lived in California, and I hoped that someday I'd be able to visit his house/museum. While I never made it out to visit him, at least I was able to briefly explain to him at that first **MONSTER BASH** how FM under his editorship helped positively shape my childhood, and the life-long memories I'll always have of buying a new (or hack) issue of my favorite magazine are among the best memories of my life.

Forrest J Ackerman, you may have left us, but you will always have a place in the hearts of countless FM readers. Here's hoping we may one day meet again, in another place and another time.

Sincerely,

JEFF PUBAL

SCARY MONSTERS 69 was one of your better issues. It's a shame that Sandra Harrison is being stubborn about her past, but the article provided us readers with 2 nice "Teenage Vampire" stills.

Would love to see more **TINY TALES OF TERROR** done comic style, perhaps if you send me a script.

Sincerely,

TIM LYNCH S. Winsor, CT 06074

I was blown away by the current 69th **SCARY MONSTERS!** I took a break from my book project, and sat down to write you.

The **SCARY SECRET PHOTO**, I'm sure is of Dracula and one of my heroes, the great Forry Ackerman, in 1973's **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN!**

As always, the stupendous Terry Beatty's cover art work is eye-popping! This **FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN** issue is one of your best ever!

MUCH APPRECIATED was the article about George Barris' talented, interesting son, Brett! Brett has certainly inherited the talents of his great dad! His "Ratula" is out of sight! MORE about Brett and George in a future issue of **SCARY MONSTERS!** These guys deserve a special, in-depth feature article, complete with a selection of photos for the greatest Barris car creations! (A hint for Brett & George: A GO-KART MUNSTER KOACH! IMAGINE!)

Some suggestions for future issues:

1. Please begin an issue-by-issue series of features about **THE OLD, CLASSIC JAPANESE HORROR FILMS!** FABULOUS AND UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES about films that are all fascinating. **GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS** (1956), **GIGANTIS, THE FIRE MONSTER** (1959), **VARAN, THE UNBELIEVABLE** (1962), **FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD** (1966), **DESTROY ALL MONSTERS** (1968), **YOG, MONSTER FROM SPACE** (1970), and **GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER** (1972) are just a tiny fraction of what's out there.

2. An **THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN** (1964) issue! An **ENTIRE SCARY MONSTERS** ISSUE devoted to this worthy Hammer/Universal classic! The casting, makeup, action, total atmosphere, and acting make this one for the AGES! An example of giving the fans what they want!

3. Pick ANY really good, classic film, say, the AIP horror epic, **THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN** (1977). Then, do an entire issue around it. Photos. Filmbook text. Info. The cast. The special effects people, etc. Your readers, myself included, would be grateful and delighted!

Until next time!

Very best,

ANTHONY M. ODDI Watertown, NY

Dennis:

SCARY MONSTERS beastly scare-filled 69th issue provided a number of interesting articles that brought back a lot of **MONSTER MEMORIES** for me.

I especially enjoyed the info on Spook Show Master, Harry Wise. Lots of these Spook shows rolled through Richmond, VA where I grew up in the 60's. I attended quite a few, so I may have actually seen Harry without ever knowing who be



was. Lots of these were at local area Drive-Ins, but at least 2 or 3 I attended were in indoor theatres. Among the road shows that popped up in my hometown over the years:

THE CRAWLING THING FROM PLANET 13—A Horror-Science Show proved by Kara Kum:

—See sadistic surgery—The Head of any volunteer will be cut off and thrown into the Audience!

—See 15 Knives pierced through the brain of any volunteer in the audience!

MONSTERS CRASH THE PAJAMA PARTY

—See Movie Monster Come Alive! Monsters

come out of the screen to carry girl victims back into picture to become slaves in a movie, never to be seen again!

—Not 3D—but Real Flesh & Blood Monsters alive in the audience!!

TEENAGE PSYCHO MEETS BLOODY MARY

—Monsters come real! Crash out of the screen & invade audience! Abduct girls from their cars!

—We dare you to remain seated when monsters invade your car!

DR. JEKYLL & HIS WEIRD SHOW

—Hey, Man, dig this crazy show—a **REAL GONE** Thriller!

—DO NOT judge by anything seen before!

—Ambulances and nurses on call at all times!

DR. EVIL AND HIS TERRORS OF THE UNKNOWN

—See girls head chopped off right before your eyes!

—Live snakes roam theatre!

—The living dead sit next to you! Grab girls from the audience! It may be your girl!

—We can't advertise what happens when the Mummy grabs slave girls and lights go out, BUT WOW! It's something you never dreamed you'd see!

—Free Shrunken Head to first 100 humans each show!

In fact, Dr. Evil's stage show was the last one I saw, back on October 4, 1969 at the WESTOVER Theatre in Richmond (I still have my faint check—"If I faint during Dr. Evil's stage show, please notify _____") I think these type of events were on their last legs by then. If memory serves me correctly, the show I was at was very sparsely attended and most of the gags fell flat, a far cry from a similar show I saw in the early 60's at the **COLONIAL THEATRE**, where audience pandemonium (with plenty of screaming) made the show seem like a funhouse. My kids would have liked these events when they were in their heyday, but some of the haunted house attractions and theme parks put on similar shows now, so the experience hasn't totally disappeared.

I also enjoyed reading about the new documentary production, **CREEPERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH**. Having lived in Virginia during most of those years, I was a particularly big fan of **THE BOWMAN BODY** (I interviewed him for our High School newspaper) and Count Gore DeVol (watched him every weekend while going to college at the University of Virginia). I was even fortunate enough to see Dr. Madblood a few times while staying at Virginia Beach. I've already bookmarked the production company's website and look forward to ordering their DVD.

Thanks for keeping the faith, Dennis. With the market for Monster Mags seemingly shrinking everyday and with former

distribution channels closing up on you and other genre publishers, it takes real dedication to preserve. My source for obtaining your magazine will dry up soon, but have no fears; I'll make arrangements to buy SCARY MONSTERS somewhere else. I wouldn't want to mess up my complete collection!

Best Wishes!

TOM SHUMAKER Parkton, MD

Hi Dennis,

I found out on "Turner Classic Movies," that Forrest J Ackerman had passed away. He was, more than any other single person, the reason that we are all "Monster Kids." As we all know, there would not be any SCARY MONSTERS, CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN, MONSTERS FROM THE VAULT, or any other monster magazines, if "FJA" had not created FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND in 1958.

I first found out about FJA in late 1963, when my Dad bought me my first FM, issue 26. An article in that issue, "The Amazing Ackerman," told me about him, and showed me what he looked like. I wish that I had the opportunity to have met him, and to have visited the Ackermansion.

I am looking forward to issue 70 of SCARY MONSTERS. I'm sure that issue will have a great deal about "Forry." The man will never be forgotten.

KEN ARCHER Bangor, ME

Forrest J Ackerman,

While, at first, his passing made me sad, I can only smile when I think of all the love and joy he spread throughout this world. And, what a gracious man he was, and remains. All of us in the Horror, and Sci-Fi, community owe him a debt that we can never possibly repay. I don't feel that he is "gone" at all. Instead, I prefer to think of him as having moved on to a more fantastic realm, with other worlds to conquer with his unique combination of knowledge and generosity.

—THE BONE JANGLER



Hi Dennis—Thank you SO much for giving us all the opportunity to express our thanks, and praise, to Forry for all he's done to make our monster addiction so pleasurable.

I'll try to condense this—it's a long story. I had always wanted to meet Forry in person, and tour the Ackermansion, but never had the opportunity. That is until June of 1993, when I was sent to L.A. for a conference for my job. On the last day of the trip, I was finally able to hookup with Forry, and made the trek to the Hollywood Hills to see the fabled Ackermansion. It was everything I thought it would be and more (as anyone lucky enough to have visited there knows). And Forry was the ultimate gracious host and tour guide letting me take pictures and explaining. After touring, he gave me a number of gifts—magazines, an FM card set, autographed pics for my daughters, and even took me to the "World famous House of Pies" for dinner!

In short, Forrest J Ackerman was a true gentleman, one-of-a-kind, and a legend in his time, and forever one in our minds.

JACK LINENDOLL

Hi Dennis:

Thanks for honoring Forrest J Ackerman in your SCARY SECRET PHOTO for issue 69. He is shown in Al Adamson's DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN accompanied by Zandor Vorkov (Roger Engel) as Dracula. Forry will never really leave us!

Keep it going forever. Hoping to meet you at the MONSTER BASH in June.

DAVID DUCEY Eldred, PA

Dear Scary Secret Photo,

I think the photo is from DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN. I hope I'm right. I love your mag. I've been with you from issue #1. Hope to see you go way past issue 100.

Your fan always,

NICK GIBSON Coldwater, MI

My Forry memories—

I first discovered FAMOUS MONSTERS magazine when the Ghoul on cover #8 called my name from the newsstand. I had never seen any mag like this before and was immediately captivated. I remember walking up slowly to the magazine rack, then reaching for this oddity and slowly opening the cover only to discover a whole new world that I'd never seen before and was immediately transformed into what is now called "A Monster Kid." I perused each and every page, absorbing the incredible monster photos and through the magic of osmosis, became one with this new and wonderful world. I brought this wonderful new "thing" home and showed my mom who looked at me like I had lobsters climbing out of my ears. But she was kind enough to accept this new love of mine! I ordered from the Captain Company, who could pass up on the treasures offered? I had to see 13 GHOSTS, the movie covered in this issue...and check that same wonderful newsstand every week, waiting to see if they had another one...and they did and I bought it! Forry offered me a world that I could not resist! A world filled with terror, wonder, frights and scares that consumed my every thought. Since that moment of finding FM #8... comic books were forgotten, Roy Rogers, Hoppy and so many other childhood necessities were dropped... there was only FM and the monsters it gave me. Thank you FSJ... you gave me something that touched my life something that made me want to read, you gave me life

JIM FETTERS

(Continued on page 74)

THE FORRY STORY

A Tribute to Forrest J Ackerman

by Tom Triman

He influenced generations of monster movie fans. He accumulated the world's single largest collection of fantastic art, literature and memorabilia. He was a visionary futurist and an eternal optimist who made science fiction fandom a way of life. Rocket expert Willy Ley dubbed him, "Mr. Science Fiction." Hugo Gernsback, oft-credited as the "Father of Science Fiction," called him the "Son of Science Fiction." Author Stephen King hailed him as "the World's Greatest Science Fiction Fan." Writer Ray Bradbury referred to him as "the most important fan/collector/human being in the history of science-fiction." Writer David Skal defined him as "that ever-avuncular avatar of monster worship." Producer/director Kevin Burns called him, "the Pied Piper, the spiritual leader, of everything science fiction, fantasy and horror." His legions of fans knew him as "The Ackermonger, Dr. Acula, Mr. Sci-Fi, The Boy Who Was Born On Mars, 4SJ, 4E" and "Uncle Forry." Of course, I can only be referring to literary agent, author, journalist, comic book character creator, actor, sci-fi guru, curator, and editor of the first and most beloved of all movie-monster magazines, the one and only Forrest J Ackerman.

Ackerman's greatest renown was as the editor of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**, the first magazine devoted exclusively to monsters and "imagi-movies." To the readers of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**, Ackerman was like a tour guide into the mysterious and fascinating dimensions of the fantastic and macabre. Within its pages, Forry introduced such classic monster movies as **THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME**, **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**, **DRACULA**, **FRANKENSTEIN**, **THE MUMMY**, **KING KONG**, **THE WOLF MAN** and **THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** to throngs of youngsters who had never heard of them before.

FAMOUS MONSTERS readers also made the acquaintance of such icons of macabre cinema as Lon Chaney, Lon Chaney Jr., Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Vincent Price, John Carradine, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. Even more significantly, the magazine fostered fan awareness of behind-the-scenes artisans like producer Tod Browning, directors James Whale, Karl Freund and Rouven Manouliian, makeup wizards Jack Pierce and Wally Westmore, and special effects technicians Willis O'Brien and John P. Fulton. Ackerman let his readers in on some of the best-kept secrets of monster-movie makeup and special effect, and engendered within them a fascination for such forgotten cinematic curios as Lon Chaney's lost vampire mystery, **LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT**.

Though Ackerman spent his life promoting the genres of science fiction, fantasy and horror, and heralded their most remarkable cinematic achievements as works of art, those who knew him best were acutely aware that his heart really belonged to science fiction. He looked to the genre as the



A little Forry before he became a Famous Monster!

gateway into a new and better world. He mused that science fiction enabled him to visit enough worlds and experience sufficient wonders to cram a thousand years of living into a hundred or so.

It's unlikely that science fiction fandom would be what it is today without Forry Ackerman. Organizations devoted to the genre that he either founded or helped establish include the Boy's Scientifiction Club, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, the National Fantasy Fan Federation, the Seattle Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame, and the Science Fiction Society.

During his lifetime, Ackerman wrote more than 2,000 articles and short stories, and edited such anthologies as **A BOOK OF WEIRD TALES**, **365 SCIENCE FICTION SHORT STORIES** and **THE ACKERMANTHOLOGY**. His literary pseudonyms included Weaver Wright, Spencer Strong, Walter Chinwell, Allis Villette, Alus Kerlay, Laurajean Ermayne, Alden Lorraine, J. Forrester Eckman, Fisher Trentworth, SF

Balboa, Hubert G. Wells, Jacques De Forest Erman, Jone Lee Heard and Sigi. Ack-Ack.

Ackerman nurtured the careers of writers Charles Beaumont, L. Ron Hubbard, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and many talented newcomers who later matured into movie industry pros. He met many other science fiction authors, and such cinema icons as Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and Vincent Price. He corresponded with hundreds of genre fans, worldwide.

Always eager to help anyone in need, Ackerman demonstrated his magnanimous altruism on numerous occasions, whether helping science fiction devotees in Mexico launch a fanzine, providing desperate producers with story ideas (often without compensation or screen credit), or lending priceless artifacts from his collection to film and video crews. He served as a creative consultant and technical advisor on numerous productions, including *THE WIZARD OF MARS*, *DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN* and Michael Jackson's *THRILLER* music video. He even worked behind the scenes, as a "spaceship string-puller," on *THE BEAST WITH A MILLION EYES*.

Though not very well-known to the general public, Ackerman was idolized by "monster kids" of the 1950's and 1960's, and made countless television appearances all over the world. While attending a New York City monster-movie convention, he signed over 10,000 autographs in three days! He made cameo appearances in over 52 films, and was often fond of saying that, due to his uncanny resemblance to Vincent Price, when producers couldn't afford the horror icon's services, they settled for Forry, for "half-price!"

Ackerman was honored in fantasy film festivals in Italy and Spain. He won four Hugo Awards, two Golden Saturns, the Count Dracula Society's Ann Radcliffe Award, the 1997 Bram Stoker Lifetime Achievement Award, was inducted into the Monster Kid Hall of Fame in 2004 Rondo Hatton Classic Horror Awards, and accumulated other assorted accolades from the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Hall of Fame, the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films, and the 1990 Horror Hall of Fame. He even had a couple of awards named after him, and was a recipient of both. In 2002, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society presented him with the Forry Award for Lifetime Achievement in the field of Science Fiction, and he was the first to receive the *MONSTER BASH* "Forry" Award, in 2007.

Ackerman was a sharp wit, and irrepressible punster and a gifted raconteur. His amazing memory retained the titles of dozens of forgotten films, the names of scores of forgotten movie stars, and enough movie trivia to fill a library.

Forrest James Ackerman was born in Hollywood, on November 24, 1916, the son of William Shilling Ackerman and Carol Cridland Wyman. His maternal grandparents, George Herbert and Belle Wyman, were devout spiritualists. George designed the Bradbury



A scene from *ONE GLORIOUS DAY*.

YOURS FREE

**100-PAGE
EXCITING
ISSUE
OF THE
WORLD'S
FIRST
MONSTER FAN MAGAZINE**



Here's your chance to get a FREE COPY of FAMOUS MONSTERS—the world's best film/monster magazine! Contains hundreds of rare photos & great stories about your favorite monsters. To get your offbeat piece of poppy night magic, just mail this coupon to the other side (with \$3+ to cover handling & mailing). Do it NOW!

The front view of a coupon flyer found in an Aurora Mummy kit that the author sent in and received his first issue of *FAMOUS MONSTERS* which ended up being the 1964 *FM YEARBOOK*.

building. He and Belle treated little Forrest to as many as 7 movies a day, and as many as 356 a year, providing him with an intensely stimulating childhood environment! Belle bought him his movie stills, from the 1930 utopian comedy, *JUST IMAGINE*.

The first film Ackerman could remember seeing was a 1922 Will Rogers comic fantasy, *ONE GLORIOUS DAY*. Five-year-old Forrest was utterly fascinated by the film's depiction of an ectoplasmic entity called "Ech." The first science fiction film he saw was the 1925 version of *THE LOST WORLD*, a tale of dinosaurs discovered on a remote, South American plateau.

The youngster soon developed a preference for fantasy films. His favorites included *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME*, *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, and *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD*. He caught *LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT* the day it opened in 1927.

Ackerman first saw Fritz Lang's **METROPOLIS** at age nine, and was totally mesmerized by its futuristic vision of automation and architectural grandeur. **METROPOLIS** instantly became Forry's all-time favorite film of any genre, and remained so for the rest of life. He saw it over 100 times!

Ackerman saw most of the science fiction, fantasy and horror films now considered classic when they were brand new. His lifelong determination to see as many "imagi-movies" as he could took him to screenings in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, England, France, West and East Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain.

Ackerman's mania for science fiction literature began at age 9, at a newsstand at Santa Monica and Western Avenue, where, as he often recalled later, the October, 1926 issue of Hugo Gernsback's **AMAZING STORIES** jumped off the newsstand, grabbed hold of him, and said, "Take me home, little boy! You will love me!" The magazine's eye-popping painting, by Frank R. Paul, depicting an ancient, 10-foot-tall, hat-like creature, glaring down at a man, somewhere in the North Pole, initiated Forry's lifelong preoccupation with the genre. A modified version of the illustration appeared on the cover of **AMAZING FORBES**, a 1976 fanzine devoted to Ackerman. In the revised painting, Forry replaced the man in Paul's original rendering.

When young Ackerman discovered that he could get an issue of **AMAZING STORIES** every month, he began snatching up each new edition, as soon as it surfaced. About three years later, the resulting clutter prompted Forry's mother to exclaim, "Son, do you realize how many of these magazines you have? Why, you have 27! By the time you're a grown man, you might have 100!" Time proved her estimate to be exceedingly conservative!

Ackerman's first literary baby steps commenced in 1929, when he began writing letters to the editor of Gernsback's **SCIENCE WONDER QUARTERLY**, under the aliases, "Weaver Wright, Ray Marlene" and "Stone T. Farmington." Whenever he saw one of his letters published, it set a chill down his spine!

In 1932, Ackerman's first published article appeared in the pages of **THE TIME TRAVELLER**, the world's first science fiction fanzine, on which he collaborated with Mort Weisinger and Julius Schwartz, as "contributing editor." That same year, his work appeared in **THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE**, edited and published by writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster, the creators of **SUPERMAN**.

At a meeting of the L.A. Science Fantasy Society, Ackerman met Ray Bradbury, later the author of **THE ILLUSTRATED MAN**, **FAHRENHEIT 451** and **THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES**. Forry edited and published Bradbury's first short story, **HOLLERBOCHEN'S DILEMMA**, in the



1938 fanzine, **IMAGINATION!**, thereby launching the author's literary career, as well as a lifelong friendship.

Also in 1938, a tall teenager, desperately searching for stills from **KING KONG**, was referred to Ackerman by the manager of a movie theater, and became another lifelong friend. The

lad's name was Ray Harryhausen, the future stop motion animation wizard, later responsible for **THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS**, **THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD** and **JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS**. Harryhausen's imaginative drawings were also published in **IMAGINATION!**

The gargantuan fervor for **KING KONG** shared by Ackerman, Bradbury and Harryhausen prompted them to refer to themselves as "The Sons of Kong," for the remainder of their lives.

During the 1930's, Ackerman began writing letters to Carl Laemmle Sr., founder and president of Universal Pictures, critiquing every film put out by the studio, as soon as he saw it. So impressed was Laemmle with the lad's reviews that he sent him a note, written on his personal stationery, that read, "Give this kid anything he wants!" Ackerman promptly toted Laemmle's note to Universal's distribution center, where he acquired the 33 1/3 sound disks from **FRANKENSTEIN**, **THE OLD DARK HOUSE**, **THE MUMMY** and **MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE** (synchronized sound disks were originally played in theaters, in the years before film labs began printing optical soundtracks on the films, themselves). That marked the inception of Ackerman's world-famous collection of movie souvenirs, which grew by leaps and bounds, into the most colossal aggregation of genre-related memorabilia ever located in one place!

By his late teens, Ackerman spoke fluent Esperanto. He learned to speak the invented language because particular science fiction



stories he'd read predicted that it would one day be spoken by all the nations of the world, ushering in a new era of utopian peace. Forry became a staunch advocate of the tongue, in science fiction circles.

In 1939, Ackerman attended the first World Science Fiction Convention, attired in a garish, futuristic costume, designed by Myrtle R. Douglas, based on the wardrobe seen in the 1936 film adaptation of H. G. Wells' **THINGS TO COME**. This was the first instance of a fan wearing a costume to a convention, initiating a trend that has persisted to this day.

Between 1934 and 1935, Ackerman attended the University of California at Berkeley. After finding temporary employment as a movie projectionist, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, in August, 1942, as a Private. Promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant, he served at Ft. MacArthur in San Pedro, where he edited a military newspaper, into which he inserted as much science fiction and fantasy as protocol would permit. Forry's 21-year old brother, Alden, was killed in the "Battle of the Bulge," on New Year's Day, 1944.

After serving in the Army for three years, and receiving an honorable discharge, Ackerman launched the Science Fantasy Agency, through which he represented over 200 writers, including Ray Bradbury, L. Ron Hubbard, Isaac Asimov, Harry Bates, Hugo Gernsback, A. E. van Vogt, Raymond F. Jones, Marion Zimmer Bradley, George Clayton Johnson and the infamous Ed Wood.

In the early 1950's, Forry married academician and translator Waydane Warfman, who had fled Germany to escape the Nazis, and whom he nicknamed, "Wendy."

In 1951, a couple from Texas visited Ackerman's Spanish-style, stucco domicile, at 915 S. Sherbourne Drive, L.A., to have a gander at his then-already-renowned accumulation of books, magazines, paintings, monster masks and movie memorabilia. On every Saturday morning, thereafter, Forry opened the doors of the "Ackermansion," as he called it, to anyone who wanted a guided tour of his chamber of collected wonders. Goggle-eyed tourists feared to blink, lest they miss any of the Ackermuseum's eye-popping contents! Though Forry's genial open house policy resulted in the pilferage of some of his most prized treasures (including the **FRANKENSTEIN** sound disks), he refused to discontinue the tours, preferring to share his phantasmagoric cornucopia with the world.

When the house became so cluttered that he and Wendy were forced to move out, they relocated to a more spacious, two-story, 5,800 square foot mansion, located at 2495 Glendower Avenue, in "Hollywood Karloffonia," the former home of actor Jon Hall, who had played both the Invisible Man and Ramar of



A couple of Forry fotos of the original Ackermansion

the Jungle. The new Ackermansion, big enough to accommodate not only the collection, but Forry and Wendy as well, was within viewing distance of the Ennis Brown estate, designed, in 1924, by Frank Lloyd Wright, and seen in an number of films, including William Castle's **HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL**.

One day, in 1954, as he was driving Wendy around in his car, with the radio on, an announcer intoned the term, "hi-fi," referring to the biggest thing to hit the recording industry, prior to the advent of stereo. Forry frequently recalled, with great fondness, what happened next: "Since science fiction had been on the tip of my tongue since 1929, I looked in the rear view mirror, stuck out my tongue, and there—tattooed on the end of my tongue—was 'Sci-Fi!'" When he tried out his freshly-coined abbreviation on Wendy, she said, "Forget it, Forry, it will never catch on!"

In 1956, Ackerman received an offer from publisher George Orlick, to edit a glossy science fiction magazine called **SCI-FI**, but, when Orlick's **SMART MONEY** magazine flopped, the project was scrapped.

In 1957, a series of significant cultural events changed the course of Ackerman's life, forever. In the summer of that year, Hammer Films of Great Britain released **THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN**, a stylish, color remake of Mary Shelley's

classic horror tale, and the box office grosses of theatrical horror films instantly skyrocketed! That October, Columbia Pictures' television affiliate, Screen Gems, syndicated **SHOCK THEATER**, a package of 52 Universal horror classics, to 50 independent stations. The show's ratings went through the roof! Suddenly, and without warning, movie monsters had become big business!

Ackerman had been selling some of his clients' stories,



what Ackerman gave them! Every issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** was shock-full of rare movie stills, behind-the-scenes photos, production art, interviews, movie tributes and star homages. Forry enlivened the proceedings with his unique brand of humor, side-splitting puns and a child's sense of wonder. During FM's heyday, the magazine received an average of 500 letters of "Fang Mail" a month!

FAMOUS MONSTERS stimulating words and images inspired kids to write stories, scripts and poems, experiment with monster makeup, and make amateur 8mm monster movies. The magazine frequently held contests to award the best homemade monster makeup or creature feature.

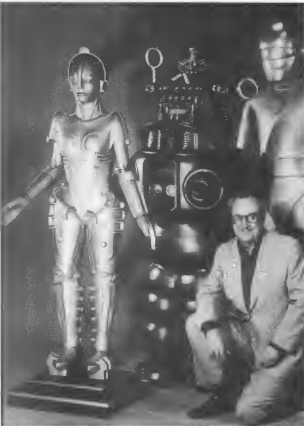
Ackerman kept his number in the phone book, so readers could call him anytime, to chat about their favorite fright flick or horror star. In August, 1963, Forry embarked on a well-publicized, 6,000-mile, cross-country road tour, in an effort to meet as many **FAMOUS MONSTERS** fans as humanly possible.

Forry and Wendy were divorced in 1958, but later remarried. Wendy and her brother, Sig, collaborated on the English translation of the long-running German **PERRY RHODAN** science fiction series, which Forry published in America, in the 1960's.

Ackerman's contributions to pop culture were hardly confined to the publishing industry. In 1961, he provided the narration for Frank Allison Coe's vinyl LP, **FORREST J ACKERMAN PRESENTS MUSIC FOR ROBOTS**, an hour-long exploration of the history and future of anthropomorphic automatons. Forry's fervent commentary was enhanced by eerie electronic tonalities.

Forry's most significant recording industry landmark was the 1967 Decca album, **AN EVENING WITH BORIS KARLOFF AND FRIENDS**, a medley of soundtrack excerpts from Universal's **DRACULA**, **FRANKENSTEIN**, **THE MUMMY**, **BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN**, **SON OF FRANKENSTEIN**, **THE WOLF MAN** and **HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN**, narrated by Karloff. Though the venerable horror star had rejected Verne Langan's original script, for being too whimsical and juvenile, he heartily approved Ackerman's more sophisticated rewrite, which paraphrased many of the actor's own published comments, from years past.

The phenomenal success of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** prompted the publication of such spinoffs as **MONSTER WORLD**, **SPACEMEN**, **FAMOUS WESTERNS OF FILMLAND** and **SCREEN THRILLS ILLUSTRATED**, as well as horror comics like **CREEPLY** and **EERIE**. Assigned by Warren to brainstorm a new horror comic character,



Forry with some robot friends and an ad for Forry's robot LP.

Forrest J. Ackerman presents

MUSIC FOR ROBOTS

Created by Forrest J. Ackerman

Sound New—Created Just for You—the Most Amazing Staff Music on Record as FORREST J ACKERMAN himself time-travels to the 21st Century to bring back Music for Robots. FJA talks to TOP for 18 minutes in a thrilling narration about EUR, Tuber, Gert, Bobby . . . the automata of Jules Verne, Edgar Allan Poe, Isaac Asimov, Leonardo da Vinci . . . the metallic Frankenstein . . . Hear weird vibrational melismatic effects, electronic melodies created for the ears of androids! ONLY \$1.98

Ackerman concocted *Vampirella* (a name inspired by that of *BARBARELLA*), the host and star of a series of chilling tales. Forry conceived *Vampirella* (or *Vampi*, as she was frequently called), as the sole survivor of *Draculon*, a planet with rivers that flowed with blood, inhabited by humanoid creatures capable of transforming into hats at will, called *Vampiri*. Warren's *VAMPIRELLA* comic debuted in September, 1969.

Towards the end of the 1970's, with inflation spiraling out of control, Ackerman steadfastly stayed on as the editor of FM, despite Warren's refusal to give him a raise. But, in 1983, financial pressures forced Forry to quit. The last issue he edited was 190.

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, Ackerman edited such emulations of FM as

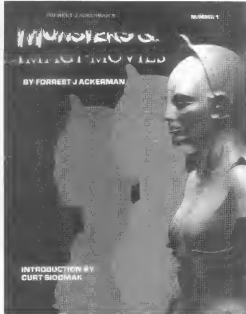
MONSTERS & IMAGI MOVIES, MONSTERLAND and MONSTERAMA. The latter combined reprinted material from the earliest issues of FM with original content. Ackerman contributed to other movie magazines, the world over, including **FANGORIA**, **FILMFAX**, **SCARY MONSTERS**, the Spanish **LA COSTA** and Argentina's **CINE FANTASTICO**.

By the 1990's, after 70 years of collecting, Ackerman had accumulated over 30,000 genre-related items. His library of 50,000+ books included 600 volumes devoted to the lost continent of Atlantis, 250 editions of **DRACULA** (including a First Edition signed by Bram Stoker, Bela Lugosi and Vincent Price) and 250 editions of **FRANKENSTEIN**. He had amassed over 125,000 movie stills, 18,000 lobby cards, countless posters, innumerable pressbooks and a multitude of newspaper and magazine clippings.

Ackerman's incredible menagerie of props included animation models of dinosaurs built for the original **KING KONG**, Robby the Robot from **FORBIDDEN PLANET**, a flying saucer from **PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE**, a hideously decomposed head crafted by makeup artist Dick Smith for a television production of **THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY**, a Cylon costume worn in the original **BATTLESTAR GALACTICA** TV series, and a Martian war machine prop used in George Pal's **ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS**, refurbished to resemble one of the malevolent crafts seen in Pal's version of **WAR OF THE WORLDS**. One of Forry's most treasured possessions was an exact replica of "Ultima Futura Automaton," the robotrix from Lang's **METROPOLIS**, meticulously recreated by industry professionals Robert Short and Bill Malone, over a period of a year and a half (600 hours).

Ackerman's wardrobe collection included Lon Chaney's makeup kit, Chaney top hat and teeth from **LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT**, the glasses Chaney wore as a wizened mandarin in **MR. WU**, a cape worn by Bela Lugosi in a 1932 San Francisco stage production of **DRACULA**, Lugosi's Dracula ring from **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN**, Boris Karloff's scarab ring from **THE MUMMY**, Mr. Spock's pointed ears from **STAR TREK**, and a monocle worn by director Fritz Lang. Ackerman's fantastic art gallery included a cemetery-scape by Ray Bradbury, original **VAMPIRELLA** artwork, and **FAMOUS MONSTERS** cover paintings by Albert Nuetzell and Basil Gogos. Don Post gave Ackerman an array of gold-plated life masks of Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney Jr., Peter Lorre, Charles Lughton, Vincent Price, Glenn Strange, Post himself and Forry himself.

Since 1982, Ackerman had been endeavoring, without success, to secure funding for a museum to exhibit his priceless collection to the public. Even Bradbury went to bat for Forry, to locate a permanent home for his treasure trove, to no avail. In 1997, Marlin Software released **THE FORREST J ACKERMAN MUSEUM OF SCI-FI, HORROR AND FANTASY**, a digital recreation of the contents of the Ackermuseum, with Forry himself appearing as a virtual tour guide. (SEE: A nine page review of this in **SCARY MONSTERS** #24!) The CD-ROM edition enabled past, present and future fans to experience Forry's collection in digital space. At the time of this writing, a single copy of the CD-ROM set was selling online, in used but good condition, for \$99.99.



While touring Milan, in the late 1980's, an assailant broke into Ackerman's car, struck Wendy in the head, and stole her purse. Three days later, she suffered a stroke, followed soon after by kidney failure. A year later, she passed away.

In the early 1990's, New Jersey portrait photographer Ray Ferry organized the 1933 **FAMOUS MONSTERS 35th Anniversary Convention**, for which Ackerman edited a special, one-shot revival of the magazine. Located in Crystal City, Virginia, the con was attended by 7,000 people from 13 countries.

So successful was the renaissance issue that Ferry opted to continue publishing **FAMOUS MONSTERS** on a quarterly basis, with Ackerman reinstated as editor, to lure nostalgic fans of the original. However, in succeeding issues, Ferry actually wrote much of the text himself, in an imitation of Ackerman's style. He substantially revised or discarded many of Forry's own contributions.

After Ferry neglected to pay Ackerman for four issues in a row, and continued to deep six his submissions, Forry resigned. Omitting Ackerman's name, but persistently appropriating his style, pseudonyms and patented, pun-fortified phraseology, Ferry continued to put out the magazine, assuming the functions of both editor and publisher.

When Ferry flouted a court order, filed by Ackerman, to cease and desist the publication of **FM**, and publically accused Ackerman of shirking his duties as writer and editor, Forry sued him for libel, breach of contract and misrepresentation.

On May 11, 2000, the Los Angeles Superior Court awarded Ackerman \$382,500 in compensatory damages and \$342,000 in punitive damages. Though Ferry appealed the verdict, it was

upheld by the California Appellate Court, in 2002. Ferry promptly filed for bankruptcy, continued to publish **FAMOUS MONSTERS**, and never paid Ackerman a penny of the \$724,500 judgment.

Not long after, Ackerman, at 86 suffered a stroke, and, while hospitalized, became comatose. He wasn't expected to recover, but did indeed rally. Overwhelmed by legal fees and medical expenses, Ferry was forced to sell the Ackermansion and liquidate the preponderance of his fabled collection. Retaining about 100 cherished collectibles, Ackerman moved to a humble, five-room apartment in the Hollywood flatlands, which he christened, the "Acker-mini-mansion," and where he resumed his time-honored custom of conducting tours on Saturdays.

Near Halloween, 2008, Ackerman was hospitalized with pneumonia. Aware that the end was near, but unwilling to spend his final days in a hospital, Ferry voluntarily returned home, where he refused any medication to prolong his life. Word of his condition soon spread over the Internet, and fans were given an address to send their well-wishes and final farewells. Ray Bradbury, James Warren and Carla Laemmle (niece of Carl Laemmle, Sr.), paid their last respects in person.

On November 6, Guy Adams posted a premature obituary for Ackerman on the British Fantasy Society's website, hastily followed by an abashed, apologetic retraction, the next day. Ferry mirthfully savored this greatly exaggerated report of his demise! On November 12, the flood of cards and letters from adoring fans caused Ackerman's health to display a miraculous and totally unexpected upturn!

On November 22, Ray Bradbury hosted a celebration of Ackerman's 92nd birthday, two days before the actual event. Though Ferry's condition precluded his attendance, he was able to share in the revelry by phone.

Before midnight, on December 4, 2008, surrounded by a gathering of friends, colleagues and fans, Ferry Ackerman succumbed to congestive heart failure.

The cultural influence of Forrest J Ackerman and **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** is so vast that it cannot be overestimated. FM spawned a host of genre-related imitators, including **CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN**, **THE MONSTER TIMES**, **FANTASTIC MONSTERS OF**



Ferry and the Ackermansion in the 1990s. (Photos on this page courtesy of Alan Light)

THE FILMS, CINEFANTASTIQUE, STARLOG, FANGORIA, VIDEO WATCHDOG, SCARLET STREET, MONSTERSCENE, MONSTERS FROM THE VAULT and SCARY MONSTERS, as well as hundreds of fanzines like **LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS** and **MIDNIGHT MARQUEE**. The magazine and its editor inspired an entire generation of monster movie aficionados, many of whom grew up to achieve lucrative and noteworthy careers in the entertainment industry, including George Lucas, Stephen King, John Landis, Tim Burton, Peter Jackson, Don Glut, Rick Baker, Joe Dante, Dennis Murin, Danny Elfman, David Allen, Bob Burns, Mario Chiodo, Ron Cobb, Jim Danforth, David DelValle, Bill Malone, Phillip J. Riley, Bill Warren, Phil

Tippet, Verne Langdon, Cortland Hull, Penn & Teller, Billy Bob Thornton and Gene Simmons (of the rock group **KISS**). Steven Spielberg once donated to Ferry a **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND** poster, bearing the inscription, "A generation of fantasy lovers thank you for raising us so well!"

Though Forrest J Ackerman died childless, he will always remain the gentle, benign, adoptive "Uncle Ferry" to legions of monster kids, throughout the world, to whom he bequeathed the heartening revelation that they were not alone in their wide-eyed fascination with the marvelous and the macabre, in whom he instilled an intensified knowledge of, and appreciation for, classic sci-fi, fantasy and horror cinema, and whose lives he enriched with extraordinarily vivid visions of fantastic worlds of wonder!



REMEMBERING BEN CHAPMAN AND THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

by Jamie Brotherton

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON has left an indelible mark on motion picture history. The movie opened a new vista for the future of underwater filmmaking, and the little menace was the last of the great Universal Monster creations, following in the footsteps of DRACULA, FRANKENSTEIN, THE INVISIBLE MAN, THE MUMMY and THE WOLF MAN.

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON remains a movie classic still commanding a loyal fan base. Its continuing popularity can be attributed in part to its basic theme: man's unending quest of the unknown. The plot revolves around a team of scientists (Richard Carlson, Julie Adams, and Richard Denning) venturing to the Amazon River in search of a prehistoric half-man, half-fish. To their astonishment, they discover a "Gill Man"—a half-human, half-amphibian being with retractable gills and scaly green skin who wreaks havoc because of the intrusion upon his once-peaceful habitat.

There has never been such a creature so skillfully created as the Gill Man. In the half century since his screen debut, the Gill Man has inspired a raft of celluloid aqua-terrors that include THE MONSTER OF PIEDRAS BLANCAS (1961), THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH (1964), ANACONDA (1997), FRANKENFISH (2004), and even JAWS (1975). The success of the first CREATURE film spawned two entertaining sequels, REVENGE OF THE CREATURE (1955) and THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US (1956). However, none of these imitations or follow-ups could live up to the original.

Ben Chapman, the talented actor best known for his riveting portrayal of the original Gill Man, stood at a towering 6' 5". There could not have been a better candidate for the role. Although the Creature would prove to be the role of a lifetime, Chapman would enjoy a prolific career during the glory years of Hollywood, experiencing firsthand a studio system that no longer exists. He mingled with some of the most prominent names in the show business, becoming close friends with many of them.

Thanks to Mr. Chapman, we can rediscover the CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, the recent news on a remake and more about the man himself.

Ben Chapman was born in Oakland, California on October 29, 1928. His parents returned to their native Tahiti until Ben turned 12. They then uprooted to California where Ben attended school during the 1940s. After completing his education, Ben settled in Santa Monica embarking upon a career in entertainment beginning with nightclub work, singing the enchanting songs of Polynesia, which he loved.

When asked about his showbiz start, Ben recalled: "In 1948 my brother-in-law and sister were entertainers. They did



Ben Chapman being introduced to his costume by legendary makeup artist. Bud Westmore. (Photos courtesy of Ben Chapman and Jamie Brotherton)

Polynesian entertainment, like you would see at a luau. They had fire, knives, drums. That's what I used to do when I was in my early twenties. From that, I got a job in my first picture PAGAN LOVE SONG (1950) with Howard Keel and Esther Williams. I was in a number with her.

"I also have relatives who were in movies. I'll begin with MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY (1935). There's Charles Laughton, Clark Gable, and Franchot Tone; when they get off of the ship and they meet with the chief—that was my uncle. Then I had a cousin, Jon Hall, who was a big star at Universal during the '40s. If you see the original HURRICANE (1937) with Dorothy Lamour, that's Jon's big picture. He also did a lot of pictures with Maria Montez (ARABIAN NIGHTS, ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES, COBRA WOMAN, etc.) and starred in a television series called RAMAR OF THE

JUNGLE (1952-1954), which was a big success. (EDITOR'S NOTE: **Forry Ackerman's** second Ackermansion was originally owned by Jon Hall!)

"Even today, my nephew Branscombe Richmond is an actor; he starred in the TV series **RENEGADE** (1992-1997) with Lorenzo Lamas." (Richmond has also appeared on such hit TV shows as **DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES**, **CHARMED** and **BAYWATCH**.)

Ben was called to active duty in 1950 where he reported to the Marine Corps and fought during the Korean War. War is always a traumatic experience, and as a combat soldier, Ben considers himself to be blessed to have survived: "Here in Hawaii I belong to what is called The Chosin Few. It's a club for those of us who were at the Chosin Reservoir, which, if you know about the Korean War, there was only one great division. We were up there and it was like 40 degrees below when the Chinese came in. We were the ones that the Chinese jumped on."

After serving his country valiantly, Ben was discharged from the Marines in 1952. A short time later, he secured a contract with Universal-International: "I was dancing at this club, the Island Room, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, which was a very nice hotel right across the street from Grauman's Chinese Theatre. There were some people coming in one night who wanted to see the show because they were thinking of using us for a musical short. They watched the show and then after we all sat around, they said that they loved it. We did the musical short for Universal titled **HAWAIIAN NIGHTS** (1952) with Mamie Van Doren, Pinky Lee and a girl named Lisa Gaye, the sister of Deborah Paget. I was the lead dancer while we were on the set. Being 6' 5", I was young and with a hard body. Not like today. So, the director, Will Cowan asked me if I would play a native chief because they needed a chief on the throne. And they needed someone who could speak Tahitian, which I could. I said, 'Oh, sure I'll do it.'

"After the studio heads saw the film, they asked, 'Who is that young guy playing the chief?' They were told, 'That's Ben Chapman. His cousin was Jon Hall who used to do all those South Sea tropical movies.' So they said, 'Oh really? Find out if he would be interested in a contract.' Today that would be a big thing but in those days if they gave you a contract it was like an agreement you'd work for them for a year. After the one year, if it didn't work out, they'd give you what they called pick-up options. They signed me, which meant I could only work for them exclusively; I could not work for anyone else. I signed a one-year contract and got paid \$125 a week. I told them I wouldn't do movies for anyone else, but I said I did nightclub work and wanted to continue to doing that. When you did nightclub work in those days you did two shows a night, and in between shows you get to sit and talk with people. It's a different life and good fun. Anyway, they said, 'Sure, okay.'"

Ben found the studio system of yesteryear to be quite an experience, nothing like one would find today. It was an open atmosphere, where he could come and go freely, and was always encountering a friendly and famous face. It was during one of his visits that he secured his trademark role. "While I was under contract, I used to go to the studio even when I wasn't doing anything. I'd drive out there and find out who was working where and doing what, and go have lunch in the



Jack Kevan, Ben, and Bud Westmore share a laugh about the costume.

commissary. They used to have a casting office right off the sidewalk; this was for extras and stuntmen. So I stopped in to say hello to everybody and this woman who was a casting director said, 'Benny, come here. Did the studio approach you about this movie that they are going to make about some kind of creature in the Amazon down in South America? I know that you would be perfect because I know you are half fish.' That is because I was what they call a free diver. I lived on the beach in Malibu at the time so I used to swim and dive in the day. And when I say free diving, it means you don't use a scuba tank; you just go out and you take your deep breaths. In those days I could go down 80 or 90 feet and hold my breath for four or five minutes. People would say 'WOW,' but it's like anything else in life, any sport. If you work out enough you can become good at it. Very simple. As long as you work out you'll become good. So one thing led to another and she arranged an appointment. I got to meet these people and when I got the part I also got a raise to \$300 a week; I was actually doing some stunts."

After signing on to do the picture, Ben had no idea the impact that **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** would have. He did, however, realize that he had some pretty big footsteps to follow in after Universal's previous horror favorites. "When I got the assignment I realized I'm going to have to follow Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney, Jr. I



thought, 'Oh my God, what am I going to do?' Then I began to think about why these people were successful. And why were all these movies successful? And finally came up with the answer—that is, it's like **KING KONG**, it's like *Beauty and the Beast*. All those movies were successful for one reason: there was a woman involved. Frankenstein has his *Bride of Frankenstein* and *Dracula* has his women. They all were involved and in love with a woman.

"But in those days it was a job, just work. When I do seminars sometimes people ask, 'In those days did you know that 50 years later it would be the way it is today?' I say, 'Are you kidding me? Of course not.' It was a job and once we finished it, it was over with, never thinking it would become what it is today. I did realize that Universal had Frankenstein, *The Mummy*, *The Wolf Man*, *The Invisible Man*...but I didn't think of myself as becoming another Boris Karloff. Years later I would be associated with the *Creature* movie, like Karloff is with Frankenstein. We made ours in 1953 and we were the last of the classic Universal Monsters. When the movie was voted into a classic, Julie (Adams) and I were extremely flattered. I am very flattered today."

Director Jack Arnold (whose credits include *IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE*, *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN*, *TARANTULA*, *THE MOUSE THAT ROARED*, and episodes of the TV series *BIONIC WOMAN*, *GILLIGAN'S ISLAND* and *THE LOVE BOAT*) had precise ideas on how to bring *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* to the screen. Ben sought out the sometimes-sterm director's advice, and they formed a deep appreciation for each other's talent: "I went up to Jack and asked, 'How do you want me to play him?' He said, 'Do me a favor and don't make a cartoon out of him.' In other words, don't go clunk, clunk, clunk. Make him real. I said, 'Oh, okay.' After I thought about it I said, 'I'm going to do him as *Beauty and the Beast*.'"

SEVEN YEAR ITCH scene with Marilyn Monroe, note *CREATURE* poster is in the background.

A good idea, and we did just that. If you see *THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH* (1955), there's a scene where Marilyn Monroe comes out of a movie theatre (showing the *CREATURE*). Tom Ewell looks at her and says, 'Well, did you like your creature?' And she says, 'Oh yes, and I felt so sorry for him.' So we did get across that he was really the nice guy, and at the end of the movie everybody felt sorry for him. After all, here come these guys with guns, and all he was doing was basically saying, 'Hey, this is my home, get out of here.' He was protecting his home. So, next time you watch the movie, watch it with that in mind.

"Jack Arnold was very strict, but I respected him. He was a professional. There is nothing worse than working with an amateur; it's horrible. Jack was tough at the beginning because he was demanding; he knew what he wanted. He was a great director so you didn't mind having him tell you what to do because he knew exactly what he was doing. At the beginning it was touch-and-go but by the time we finished, it was all hugs and kisses, 'Hey baby.'"

There would be a unique quality to the picture that would even surprise Ben. The appearance of the Gill Man would be unlike any other of the Universal Monsters. During construction the image was to be kept under wraps. A team of creators would perfect the image of the Gill Man. But it was Millicent Patrick, a talented designer with movie star looks who brought his likeness to life, along with creative geniuses Jack Kevan, Chris Mueller, and legendary make-up artists Bud Westmore. Thanks to their collaborative efforts, the image of the Gill Man remains iconic in the horror film genre.

Ben was impressed when he first cast his eyes upon the creation. "While they were making the costume it was hush-hush, top secret. No one was allowed in makeup, no one was

allowed to come up there and see it. They did not want to show him until he was finished. But the first day, I watched it being built because they built it on me. They said, 'Okay, Benny, it's all finished and here it is. Take your clothes off and let' see what it looks like.' I put it on and stood in front of the mirror and I went, 'Wow!' It was so well made. The suit was made of foam rubber, the under part was like a body stocking like you have in pajamas. The only thing you see is the face; the rest is all covered. This was like a leotard body stocking, all stretchy material underneath, and they molded each piece separately so it would stick on. They took a plaster of Paris impression of my whole body, then they stuck everything on there. Another thing about him is that he was very striking looking. He was not menacing or evil looking, he was just an unusual looking person.

"Speaking of the costume, you'll notice that many later movies have been made where characters resemble the Creature. Since our movie was made, it's been copied literally hundreds of times. Before our movie, you never saw anything that resembled him, but since then there are all kinds of characters that have come out with two arms and two legs, except with little differences, some might look like a dinosaur. So we are all very flattered; imitation is the biggest flattery you could have."

Ben decided to have fun with the plaster of Paris bust that was used to mold the special Gill Man costume. "When the movie was finished, we were standing around one day and Bud (Westmore) asked me, 'Do you want this?' They were going to throw (the bust) out so I said, 'Yeah, what the hell!' So I took it home. I lived on the beach and I was married to a French girl at the time. When I got home and brought it in she said, 'What are you going to do with that?' I said, 'I don't know.' I took it down to the beach; it was just the lower half of the shoulders and up; that is where they molded the mask. I colored it brown like a suntan and I put some dark glasses and a hat on it. I placed it in the sand and we'd watch people walk by on the beach. You'd see them staring at it: 'There's a guy buried over there! With only his shoulders and head showing!' We'd laugh and laugh. When we moved (my wife) said, 'What do we do?' I said, 'Hell with it!' I left him; I have not idea if anyone has it. They don't know what it is, just a bust of a guy's head. That bust could be worth \$100,000 today!"

CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON was slated for two months of production time in October and November 1953, coinciding with Ben's 25th birthday. Although it would be work as usual on his birthday, the atmosphere of the set could not have been a merrier environment for cast and crew. They all enjoyed each other's company and Ben would form a lifelong friendship with the object of the Gill Man's affections, Julie Adams. Ben fondly reflects, "Julie is lovely and I still work with her today. I love her. I told her that when I talked to her, she is just a lovely person and she goes, 'I love you too. I



United Press photo

WE KNOW WHERE HE'LL BE HALLOWEEN

Actress Julie Adams examines unmasked "Gill-Man" who's really Korean War veteran Ben Chapman on set of Universal's "Black Lagoon."

Costume was makeup man Bud Westmore's answer to request for something different in horror monsters. Miss Adams stars in the spooky film.

Ben and Julie receive publicity for their famous film.

really enjoyed the whole experience (making the film). It was an unusual filming because it was the type where you woke up in the morning and you couldn't wait to get to work. We had so much fun, and we were so much a family. Like I had my family at night and I had my daytime family. We just couldn't wait to get to work, it was hugs and kisses."

The film was shot on Universal Studio's back lot where the Lagoon set still remains (and has subsequently been used for other underwater spectacles such as Steven Spielberg's 1975 masterpiece JAWS). Two units would be recruited for the shoot, which included a set in Wakulla Springs, Florida (south of Tallahassee). The second unit, led by director James C. Havens, was responsible for the magical underwater sequences. Olympic swimmer Ricou Browning (who would later create the FLIPPER television series [1964-1968] doubled for Ben Chapman. As a result, there has often been some confusion as to who played the Gill Man during specific sequences. Ben clarifies: "Since there was no water that we could use clear

enough to film, they got four people in Florida. Ginger Stanley doubled for Julie Andrews, Stanley Crew for Richard Carlson, and Jack Betts for Richard Denning. Ricou Browning did my underwater scenes. There is a scene where Richard Carlson and Richard Denning go over the side of the ship. They have their tanks on and they go down the ladder and into the water, putting on their masks. They are still talking. All of a sudden *boom*, they go underwater! It cuts from them there to them swimming under. You cut from them to the stunt doubles underneath. Before Ricou and I got together about five years ago to clarify everything, people were making a big deal of it. I tell people the best way when you look at the movie, look at the water. Anything below the surface of the water is Ricou, anything above the surface where there is air, that's me. I was the actor, Ricou was more or less the stunt double."

Years later at Universal's back lot, Ben's young son would experience a taste of the Gill Man's popularity. "My son, who is in film school, went on a tour of Universal Studio's with his mom, his girlfriend and his friend when they went on vacation. They got on the little tram that takes you out to the lake that was used for **JAWS** and **MCHALES NAVY**. The tram started to leave, but then stopped and announced, 'By the way, there was a movie called **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** filmed here. 'My son stood right up and yelled, 'That was my dad!' There are like 50 people on the tram. The guy stopped and said, 'What?' 'That was my dad!' My ex-wife was just embarrassed and was like 'Shut up! Shut up!' So the conductor stopped and asked, 'What do you mean, your dad?' He replied, 'My dad played the Creature.' The guy asked, 'What's your dad's name?' He replied, 'Ben Chapman. I'm Grant Chapman.' When they finished the tour I was told that as everyone got off they went up to Grant and asked for his autograph on their programs!"

The early 1950s were considered the golden age of experimental 3-D filmmaking. Every studio was using this format at the time, and Universal-International was no exception. **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** was considered an ideal choice for 3-D, especially since Jack Arnold had directed Universal's first 3-D feature, **IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE** (1953). Ben remembers that the process did not cause any upheaval in production. "We were like the fifth or sixth film to use the 3-D process. If you see the movie on a big screen in 3-D, it just leaps off the screen and out at you!"

In addition to the 3-D effects, the film is notable for its music score by Hans J. Salter. "We had theme music in our movie," Ben recalls. "We were the first ones to do it. When the Creature was around, there was a certain sound. You hear the sound but you don't see him. It tells you that he was around. Steven Spielberg took that same idea and made in into *doom-doom-doom-doom* for the shark in **JAWS**. You didn't see the shark but when that sound comes up, you know he is around. So Spielberg was inspired by our film.

"Spielberg and (George) Lucas were big kids; they'll tell you that in their biography. They went to movies when they were kids and they loved the Saturday afternoon matinees."

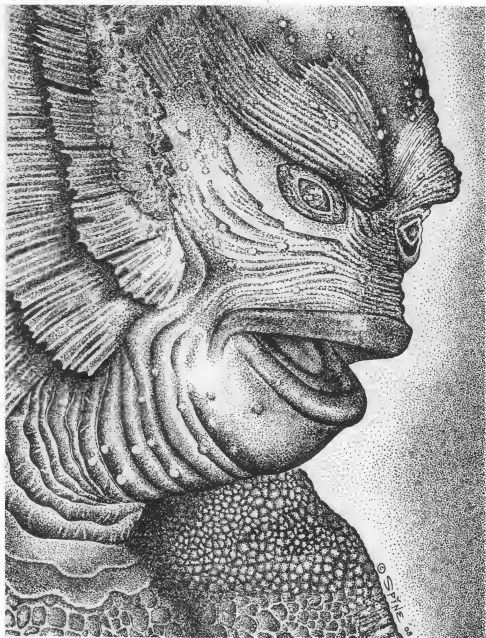
Special effects were also implemented during a scene where



an irate Gill Man frees himself after being captured by the scientists. Ben was unable to do his own stunts for fear of injury, so Al Wyatt, Rock Hudson's double, was enlisted. "For that scene, they put me in the cage, then the Gill Man breaks out of the cage. Then I get hit with the lantern, catch fire, and dive over the side. What we did for that was we went through the scene, there was no fire, the lantern didn't have any fire in it. It was just going through the motions where he hits me and I start patting myself like I'm on fire and dive off. Then they bring a stunt double in. He would watch the film and the way I'm moving. When he did it he had an asbestos suit on. When it is time, they lit (the suit) and he went through the motions putting out the flames and dives off. They took that and superimposed it over me. Next time you watch the movie, when you get to that scene, hit the remote button to make it slow, you can see that the flames are superimposed on top of me. The burning comes from inside out. When it is superimposed they lay it on top of you and if you look very closely you can see I'm not on fire and that it's superimposed. Rock Hudson's double did that because Rock and I were good friends. As a matter of fact, Rock and I were the same identical size."

Ben and Rock would amuse others with their gregarious sense of humor: "We used to play games where we'd be sitting, eating (in the commissary) and we would both get up and go into the bathroom. We would get in there and change clothes. He'd take his clothes off and I'd take my clothes off. He'd put my clothes on and I'd put his clothes on. Then we'd go back in and we'd sit at the table, not saying anything. People would look at us and go, 'There's something different.' Here we were just there but yet there's something strange about them. But, they wouldn't notice that we had changed clothes."

The Creature's lagoon would be transformed into a place of levity for the mischievous duo: "Rock used to bring visitors on board and the big thing when we were filming the movie in the back lot up above the lake was, he and I arranged it where he would bring people, and he would say, 'Here, let me take you up to the Creature.' They'd say, 'Oh, yeah, yeah I heard about that.' They would call the set and say that Rock is on his way,



SCARY 70TH TRIBUTE ISSUE FROM THE **BLACKY LAGOON!** **030 SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE** *A Real Monster Magazine!*

I would go out a couple hundred feet and I would do how you see alligators, where you only see the top of their head and eyes when they're going through the water. I would get way out there and just show the top of my head and eyes, and I would sit and look. Then I would get near as Rock would get down to the shore. I would see him pointing telling people, 'See that thing floating out there that looks like a ball? That's him.' And you could see the people looking and when that would happen, I would start coming in, moving towards the shore until I got to the point where it's four feet deep, three feet deep...I would get close to the shore and get to the point where I could arrange my legs and body where I could just spring and jump straight up, getting my legs ready with my hand. All of a sudden I'm not that far away from them...they're sitting there talking and all they can see is the top of my head. Then I would leap straight up in the air and I would go 'RAAAAAA.' People would just go crazy! They'd be so shocked. (The studio) finally told me, 'Somebody is going to have a heart attack.' So we had to quit doing it."

Ben has great respect and admiration for classic horror film stars Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, and Lon Chaney Jr. "I met Boris and Bela, although I didn't get to know them that well. Boris was a very classy guy in real life, nothing like his (onscreen) character. He was a very handsome man with snow white hair, very tan, and he had this great voice and English accent. When I say handsome, I don't mean Rock Hudson. Boris was very distinguished looking. He used to wear these beautiful tuxedo suits. If you see some of his old TV shows, like when he hosted **THRILLER**, that is what he really looked like. I now do (personal appearance) shows with Boris' daughter, Sarah. She is a very sweet person and another one that I love."

"Bela and Lon...they had problems, drugs and booze. Years before, Lon starred in **THE WOLF MAN** (1941). But it got to the point where he would be sitting at a bar and someone would look up at him and say, 'You're Lon Chaney!' He would say, 'I am.' 'Can I get your autograph?' 'Only if you'll buy me a drink.' That's a shame!"

It was a bittersweet ending when **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** wrapped production. The production "family" disbanded and went their separate ways to pursue other film roles. But Ben put on the Gill Man costume one more time, for an encore appearance on **THE COLGATE COMEDY HOUR** with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello.

Abbott and Costello remain one of the greatest comedy teams in the history of entertainment. With their outrageous routines, their classic **WHO'S ON FIRST** routine, and their unending



Abbott and Costello with their Universal Monster brigade. They didn't miss a beat adding the Gill Man to the repertoire.



shenanigans, the straight man-jester duo never failed to leave audiences in hysterics. They were Universal's premier comedy stars from 1940 to 1955, racking up huge box office grosses with films like **BUCK PRIVATES** (1941), **IN THE NAVY** (1941), **HOLD THAT GHOST** (1941), **PARDON MY SARONG** (1942), and **IN SOCIETY** (1944).

Among the team's best-remembered efforts are their encounters with Universal's monster brigade: **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN** (1948), **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN** (1951), **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE** (1953), and **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE MUMMY** (1955). Understandably, many have wondered why didn't Abbott and Costello Meet the *Creature from the Black Lagoon*?

With the *Creature* being the last of the classic Universal monsters, the timing was wrong. **MEET THE MUMMY**, Bud and Lou's last film for the studio, was released in 1955, while **THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US**, the final Gill Man entry, was released the following year. If Bud and Lou had re-signed with Universal, the encounter may have been inevitable. Nevertheless, Abbott and Costello did meet the *Creature*—for an installment of **THE COLGATE COMEDY HOUR** that aired live on NBC-TV in February 1954.

The popular Colgate variety show had a rotating line-up of

guest hosts (including Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Donald O'Connor, Eddie Cantor, Fred Allen, and Bob Hope at various times), which included Bud and Lou. This particular installment marked Lou Costello's return to the series after collapsing from exhaustion the previous November. Because of this, Bud and Lou only appeared in one segment, while the rest of the show featured Keefe Brasselle and Sonia Henie.

Nick Santa Maria, film historian, writer, comedian and Broadway performer (**THE PRODUCERS**, **GREASE**, **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVLER SHOULD KNOW**, etc), sheds light on this period of Abbott and Costello's prolific career: "**ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN**, made in 1948, revived their sagging career. So, Universal had them meeting most of their studio monsters. As for how they felt making monster movies, Bud pretty much followed Lou's lead in business matters for the team. He just did what he was told, pretty much. It was Lou who made the decisions and cared more about the films. He **HATED** the script for **A & C MEET FRANKENSTEIN** when he read it. He threatened not to do it, but eventually broke down because his mom liked it. The film brought them back up to the top. So, naturally they liked any formula that would keep the public coming in. Lou had always wanted to do more prestigious movies, but the studio thought of them like they thought of Ma and Pa Kettle, and the Francis films, inexpensive to make, and a sure profit. Their monster films are hit and miss, but when they worked they were lots of fun; it's unfortunate **A & C** did not meet **The Creature** on film. It would have been interesting. **The Creature** was a new kind of monster for Universal, and it wasn't based on one of their old guard monsters, which were all pretty much based on gothic novels and ancient legends. Bud and Lou were wrapping things up at Universal just as the **Creature** was in the throes of their **Creature** series, so the timing was bad, but it was exciting to see Lou meet the **Creature** on TV, even briefly. At least we have that."

In their segment, Abbott and Costello are being given a tour of Universal's prop department (actually, it's the stage of the El Capitan Theater where the **Colgate** show was performed), guided by an elderly prop man (a heavily-disguised Norman Abbott, Bud's nephew, who later became a very successful TV director). The boys perform their "Moving Candle" routine (seen in **HOLD THAT GHOST** and **MEET FRANKENSTEIN**), and later Lou interacts with the **Frankenstein Monster** (Glenn Strange, who played the role previously in **HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN**, **HOUSE OF DRACULA**, and **MEET FRANKENSTEIN**) and a brief run-in with the **Creature** (Ben).

"That was fun with Abbott and Costello," Ben remembers. "We had already finished (**CREATURE**), although it hadn't been released yet. I got a call one day and was asked if I wanted to do the **Colgate** show. I was to report down to NBC. When I got there they said, 'You're going to do a scene with **Frankenstein**.' 'Boris?' They said, 'No, it's going to be Glenn Strange.' Glenn Strange was later very famous for his role as the bartender on **GUNSMOKE**. He was the big guy with the moustache, and he played the **Monster** in three movies,



More than one person was required to assist in applying the Gill Man costume.

including **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN**.

"I'll tell you a story about Glenn. He was the first guy that they asked to play the **Creature** because he had already done three **Frankensteins**. But, he was the cowboy type and cowboys and water don't mix. You don't see cowboys taking showers. When he found out it involved water, he went, 'Water? Water? No.' So when I saw him at NBC when we did the Abbott and Costello show, I said, 'Glenn, thank you very much for turning **CREATURE** down.' He was a wonderful man."

What would be two minutes of air time for the **Gill Man** proved to be a trying time on the set of **THE COLGATE COMEDY HOUR**: "When we went to the studio we did the scene in one day. I didn't get to know Abbott and Costello that well. I met them for about a half an hour, but I heard they were nice. When I arrived at the studio they took me to my dressing room because it involved getting in the costume. Lou Costello was a heavy gambler. In fact, they kept Glenn and I waiting. Here Glenn and I are already in costume, now the costume is very hot. They kept us waiting while Lou was playing **Gin Rummy**, and he was losing. No one told him what to do. He

said, 'No, we're going to play a little more.' 'But, we're ready.' 'No, no, no.' I couldn't get out of the costume, but I could get the head off, we had to wait for Costello to finish his game. Poor Glenn, he couldn't take off anything. His makeup, when it's on, it's on, couldn't do anything until they say, 'Okay, we're ready for you.' After hours of waiting, finally we got it down and when we were finished I said, 'God, get me back to the dressing room, get me out of this outfit! Just get me out of here!' It's very dangerous because it's a one piece body stocking; your body breathes through pores and if you shut your pores down, you're going to have problems and your body doesn't breathe. There are people who can die from it. I kept telling them, but no one would listen that we have to get this going. When we finally got through with it and they got me back, all I wanted was to 'Get out of this NOW.' I kept saying NOW. 'You could strip me right here on the set as far as I'm concerned, I'll walk around with my shorts on!'

Ben admits that it would have been interesting if Abbott and Costello did a feature film with the Creature but rationalizes that the TV skit was the next best thing. "I thought about why (Bud and Lou) didn't do one with the Creature, but they left the studio before it could have happened. They were big stars at Universal and they got me on their TV show. The Creature movie hadn't been released yet, and the studio didn't want anybody to see him. They kind of tied it in where I appeared on their show; the movie was released about two months later. Abbott and Costello asked for me. They had heard about this new monster that was coming out and they said, 'Oh, we want him.' They wanted the Creature because they didn't make any movies with me, and since they met all the other monsters, they wanted me too. I tried to figure out how they could get me when the movie hadn't been released, but they were such big stars and they were so popular. The studio just did a tie-in where I did their show, and it was great publicity because when the movie came out people would say, 'Oh, yeah—I saw him with Abbott and Costello!'

After audiences received a sneak peek of the enigmatic Gill Man, anticipation was heightened for the film's release, and in April 1954 **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** premiered: "I went to a theatre in California with an actor named Race Gentry. When we got there, there was a big long line. Race kept going, 'Come on Ben, go tell the manager who you are.' We could have been taken right in and given the best seats, but I was like, 'Shut up.' It was successful the day that it came out. I'll share a little trivia: Universal Studios was on the verge of bankruptcy. The revenue from the movie saved the studio. That happened before with **FRANKENSTEIN** (1931).

Critics responded positively, hailing **CREATURE** as a sensation and Ben's portrayal of the Creature stole the picture. People were left in wonderment as to who was this Gill Man. Ben's name did not appear in the credits, something that would seem unheard of today, but made perfect sense then, adding to the mystery. Ben explains: "It didn't bother me that I didn't get credit. If you see the original **FRANKENSTEIN**, Boris didn't get credit—in the cast list, when it says "Frankenstein Monster," there is only a question mark. They didn't even do



Wearing such a costume was an intense experience for the young actor.

that with Ricou and I; they wanted to give an illusion, because if you put our names up there, people will go, 'Oh, it's just a guy with a costume on.' It's psychological like they actually went down to the Amazon, captured the Creature and gave him two weeks of acting lessons."

As Ben enjoyed the success of **CREATURE**, he mingled with Hollywood's elite: Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe, and Peter Lawford. They were among the biggest stars of their era, but to Ben they were simply his good friends: "I had known Peter Lawford for a long time. We used to surf together when I lived in Santa Monica and Malibu, so did Peter. And I met him when I moved there in 1948. Then of course he married into the Kennedys.

"I used to tend bar at a place called Santa Monica Canyon. The beach was about a half a block away. On Saturday—it was a slow day, about 11 or noon—the door opens up. 'Hey, Benny.' 'Hi Peter.' He came up to the bar with some guy and says, 'I want you to meet my brother-in-law, Jack.' This is when the John F. Kennedy was still Senator. I was privileged in my life to know different people. It was a different life. Now you see all these people with big bodyguards. In those days nobody had bodyguards. They moved around freely. All of a sudden you'd hear a car going honk, honk, I'd turn around and

there goes Jeffrey Hunter. A great movie star. Honk, honk, he'd pull over, 'Hey what's going Jeffrey?' 'Where you going Benny?' 'I'm on my way to the store, or going down to Peter's bouse.' Peter never had a bodyguard."

"I met Frank Sinatra through Peter. Frank was a great guy, but he was very moody. I'd come to (Peter's) bouse and if I knew Frank was going to be there I'd say, 'How's Frank?' Peter would say, 'Don't go, you know, avoid him.' He would be sitting in a corner sulking, but it wouldn't last. But when Frank was in a bad mood, you didn't go near him. When JFK was elected President, Frank organized all of the entertainment for the Inaugural. Frank thought, 'Wow, JFK being President, now I get the President, my buddy.' Jack used to fly to Vegas and sit ringside with Frank up on stage. JFK had a very active libido; all the Kennedys were that way. If you look at the Kennedys, that was their big downfall, their libido."

"When JFK would go to Palm Springs on vacation, Frank had a home there, and he built quarters for the secret service. He built a heliport for when Jack was flying on the helicopter; he just went through all of this. Bobby Kennedy, Jack's brother, changed all that when he found out about Frank's connections with Sam Giancana and the mob. So now that Jack was President, Bobby told him, 'You better not have anything to do with Sinatra.' Frank didn't know that, so he bad all this work done (on his home) so Jack could stay there. But instead, when Jack went to Palm Springs, he stayed with Bing Crosby. And Frank went ballistic—when I say ballistic, when Frank goes crazy, get out of the room! I am serious. He trashes the room and he'll trash you along with it! So he just went crazy, and trashed everything that he built. He blamed it all on Peter because Peter was the President's brother-in-law. He called Peter and went crazy on him. Peter said he had nothing to do with it. And that is when they broke up. Frank was the type who just excommunicated Peter. Peter felt so bad that he didn't have his friendship anymore, and that is when he started taking up drugs. Peter got heavy into cocaine and drinking. I used to see pictures of him, and he had the bushy sideburns."

"I was living in Tahiti at the time and I couldn't go down and see him or anything, and then of course he and his wife, Pat Kennedy, bad divorced. He was still able to work but it finally got to the point where he went downhill. I felt very bad when he died. I cried. If you look at Peter's earliest movies he was just the handsomest guy; he had so much class. That is what Frank always used to say. He'd say, 'Benny look at him, boy does he get class!' And Peter did. When you saw him at the peak of his career, he had that great accent, that great voice, a classy guy. I saw him go from that right into the toilet."

A year after the film's release, the Creature remained in the limelight, and was even referenced to in Marilyn Monroe's 1955 hit **THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH**. In a scene after Monroe emerges from the movie theatre, just before the infamous skirt-blowing scene, she speaks to Tom Ewell of "feeling sorry for him." At the time, it was unheard of for any to promote another studio's picture; but **CREATURE** was so popular that 20th Century Fox did.



Gill Man carrying the object of his affection off to his lair.

Marilyn Monroe would find herself face-to-face with the real Gill Man at a party hosted by Peter Lawford: "Marilyn used to live right up in Brentwood, she and Peter were very close. One day I went over to the bouse, Marilyn was there. The way I talk, you see, these were human beings and we treated each other as human beings, you would never (be in awe). So, we were talking later in the evening. One of my favorite movies was **THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH** where Marilyn had scenes that referred to the Creature. So here I am thinking, 'How can I introduce myself?' I just can't walk up to Marilyn and say 'You know the movie you made, that was me.' So I said 'I admire your talent,' then finally, 'My favorite movie of yours was **SEVEN YEAR ITCH**.' She said, 'Oh, that was one of mine too.' And I said, 'I especially like that one scene.' And she goes, 'Oh you mean the one where my dress is being pulled up?' I said, 'Oh, no, no, no...when you came out from the movie. You know that movie you mentioned?' She goes, 'You mean Creature from the Black Lagoon?' 'Oh, right yeah.' By now I am stuck; I can't say, 'Well, that was me.' Peter was there and he turned to her and said, 'By the way Marilyn, you know Benny played the Creature?' She looked at me and went, 'You did?' I said, 'Yes, did you ever see the movie?' She replied, 'Oh yes, I LOVED it!' Of course, I just floated away."

"I would watch Marilyn and she was a very troubled person; she would go off and be sitting there by herself and I would look over at her and I could tell that she's not with us right now. Her problem was she had a tough life and she wanted to be taken seriously. But she had been used by the studio system and by the casting couch. Earlier in her career she had been used by 20th Century Fox. They had big lavish offices, and next to the offices they had small bedrooms with showers. If they had to go somewhere they could get cleaned up and take a shower. They also had beds in there. That troubled her, now that she was a major star, how she did it. I loved her, but she was on pills; she would sit there and drink champagne all night and be popping pills. I'd look at her and feel so sorry. I wanted to go up and say, 'Marilyn, let me take you away from here—get away.' She tried it several times but it didn't work. She was so far hooked into it, but she was a WONDERFUL person. She was intelligent, a very smart person. It's just that she was a troubled person who drank too much. When I say drinking I mean champagne with vodka, and popping pills. She wasn't one for cocaine. That happened to Peter. I felt SO bad, oh my God. Then when I saw Peter, and then when he died, I cried. We were close. The next thing about him that I saw was when Peter's son Chris was on Larry King's show. And, oh my God, Chris looks just like Peter. It's like Peter reborn again. He loved his father too and talked about him. It's sad Peter's liver gave out and that's how he died. Peter was a nice person...these were all nice people."

Ben continued to remain active as an actor, although not in roles as high-profile as the Creature. Ben appeared as a stuntman in a number of westerns and in films such as *MA AND PA KETTLE AT WAIKIKI* (made in 1952 but not released until 1955), *JUNGLE MOON MEN* (1955; billed as "Benjamin F. Chapman, Jr."), then stage and television during the '60s (he appeared in the pilot for the *HAWAIIAN EYE* TV series).

Odd as it may seem, when Universal shot *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* and *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US*, Ben did not revive the role. "I had already left the studio, and that's why I didn't do them. Two good friends of mine did them instead. Tom Hennessy did *REVENGE OF THE CREATURE* and he is still living in Malibu. Don Megowan did *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US*, sadly Don is no longer with us. The sequels were good, but I hated the last one because they changed the Gill Man. They took away his gills, the webbing. I can't explain it to you; you have to see it. He gets involved in a fire and winds up looking just terrible!"

Ben eventually retired from show business, and for ten years was an executive with the 7-UP bottling company. He moved back to Tahiti in 1975. In 1987, he relocated to beautiful Hawaii, dedicating himself to tourism and real estate investment.

With the passage of over 50 years, *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* sustains a fervent fan following, too large to be even considered a cult. With the release of the *CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON* LEGACY COLLECTION on DVD, consisting of the original film and



Ben Julie, Richard Carlson, enjoying time on the set.

the two sequels, plus a special commentary by Ben himself, the Gill Man is readily available to be viewed by old fans and first-time viewers.

For the last ten years, Ben, along with the ever-lovely Julie Adams, had dedicated time attending Movie Memorabilia conventions across the United States. He loved his fans, whom he affectionately called "Gillies." Ben and Julie would sign autographs, pose for photos and speak about their famous film. The always stressed how important their fans have been, never having tired of encountering enthusiasts.

As Ben sat at his table, he was always effervescent and engaging with a smile: "I am very conscious of my fans. Julie and I both are. Our fans are EXTREMELY important to us. I always say, 'I want to thank you for being such a loyal fan of the Gill Man because if it weren't for you, the Gill Man would be dead, buried and forgotten a long time ago.' In other words, you are the person who keeps him alive. I have nothing to do with it. I just happen to be the lucky person who portrayed him. I appreciate that you like him."

"When we do these shows, we don't do it for the money. You don't retire on what we get: \$25 an autograph. I've been doing shows for ten years, and I worked with a lot of stars. A lot of them sit at their table like, 'Here I am.' I go, wrong attitude.

You wouldn't be sitting there if it weren't for the fans. Me and Julie love our fans, and we want to be approachable. If they want to come up and have picture, hugs and kisses, bey fine. If I've got all day, then I'm going to be sitting at this table all day."

It is not surprising the acclaim the Gill Man has attained over the years. The film has actually guided the lives of many individuals, steering them on the course of their professions, and that is something Ben is very proud of. "I get email all the time from all over the world, people who say, 'Because of your movie I am now working as a conservationist...because of the movie I'm doing for this or that.' Or, 'I became a diver because of the movie.' It makes me feel wonderful!"

For several years rumors have been circulating about plans to remake **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** with many attempts falling through.

The remake most currently had been planned to be written and produced by Gary Ross, the son of the creature's original writer, Arthur Ross. Ben has had misgivings about such a remake: "Arthur Ross is still alive, his son Gary won an Academy Award for **SEABISCUIT** (2003) with Tohey McGuire. Gary was thinking of doing a remake sometime ago, but that never materialized. People ask about the remake, and I really don't want them to do it. That's because I don't trust people today with all of this hi-tech stuff. You see, ours was made by hand, literally. Everything was done by hand, the costume was molded, sculpted, not like today. Today they can stamp things out, they don't even need actors, they can do (computer) graphics. Today you see movies when there are thousands of extras and they are not even real people; they draw the stuff in. In our day, with a great movie like **LAWRENCE OF ARABIA** (1962) with Peter O'Toole, there were hundreds of thousands of extras...those were real people. Today they don't do that; instead just the front part of it is real and the rest is fake."

"First of all they would change the way he (Gill Man) looks, and it would be done in color. I think it should stay black-and-white. A lot of our dramas were black-and-white, except for musicals. And black-and-white is not the same as color because it is lit differently."

"If a movie becomes a classic, it becomes a classic for a certain reason, because of the people. It's the fans who make it a classic, and if it becomes that, you should put it up on a shelf and leave it alone. That's why it's a classic. Put it up there and leave it alone."

Filmmaker/screenwriter, Greg Glienna (**MEET THE PARENTS** [2000], **A GUY THING** [2003], **MEET THE FOCKERS** [2004]), not only found himself inspired by the



A scene in the film which was later cut.

Universal films; he perceives that a remake may just boost the original without harming the film's appeal: "The Universal horror films were the first films that made me fall in love with movies as a kid. I was obsessed and tried to collect everything I could about these films, I even used to have a model of the Creature. I don't object to a remake, it will only raise awareness of the original, although it will probably be too slick and overdo the special effects, like most horror films do today I think the Creature is one of the genuinely scary horror icons in film history, something you *really* wouldn't want to find in a dark hallway. I definitely feel the Universal Creature is an unforgettable horror icon."

Why has **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** stayed as fresh today as in 1954? Ben explains: "I say because of the story. First of all he (Gill Man) was the good guy, they were the bad guys. It's true, because that was his home; remember they invaded, they came with a boat and came into that little opening when they got into that lake, that is his home. That's the only thing he could do when he saw these people which, to him, were unusual-looking. I tell people, 'What would you do if you went home tonight and you found about ten people having a party in your living room? What would you do? You would get irate, start yelling and screaming to get them out. If you had to, you'd kill a couple of them.' In the process, he saw the girl and fell in love with her."

"Basically the reason the story is good, even today, is that there are still scientists trying to find out where man comes from, they don't know if he comes from a monkey, a dog, those who don't believe in religion and that God created, they believe in evolution. That is why there is a big thing between evolution and religion. There are some that believe man came from the sea, that is where the lungfish comes in. He came from the sea



went up on to the beach and the fins became arms and legs. That is the story about **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON**; these scientists who find him. First of all, Dr. Maia finds that claw hand, and then they go look and if you see at the very opening of the movie, when it first comes on, you see that big hang of creation. Then it cuts to the sea and shows footprints coming up on the sand. (I did put those prints there) but it shows something came from the sea onto the land because it came across the beach."

"Watch the movie again because most people immediately expect they're going to watch this Gill Man killing people, like he is the bad guy. Next time you watch the movie, in your mind don't draw conclusions. Watch the movie and watch him; first time you see him is when they go down with the camera and he is in the reeds and grass looking up at them, he is very curious as to say, 'Oh my goodness, look at these guys. They have arms and legs like me but they don't have skin like me.' He is curious, so he wasn't mean. He already killed some guys in the tent because they had invaded over there. He didn't get mean underwater until he took a shot at him; remember the spears. Then he got irate. He goes 'Hey, hey, what is this?'" So the next time you watch the movie don't draw conclusions, look at it. Of course, there that great, famous underwater scene of Ginger and Ricou, where he swims under her and looks up at

(Left to right) Bud Westmore. Julie Adams. Jack Arnold (Director). William Allan (Producer) and Jack Kevan in the black suit looking left.

ber and falls in love."

Film historian and author Ted Okuda (**THE JERRY LEWIS FILMS, CHICAGO TV HORROR MOVIES SHOWS**), comments on the Creature's popularity: "The Gill Man is one of the best-known and best-loved movie monsters of all time. The original **CREATURE** film is a bona fide motion picture classic, of course, although the two sequels are quite good in their own way and are often underrated. Over the years, the Creature's likeness has been used for toys, trading cards, and model kits, and his image has been seen in countless books and newspapers and magazine articles.

"During the 1960s, there was no such thing as home-video entertainment, but there were companies that manufactured 8mm condensations of feature-length films. Castle Films, a home-movie distributor affiliated with Universal Pictures, released 8mm 'digest' editions of several classic horror and science fiction films, including the three Creature features. (For some reason, Castle's digest for **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** was titled **CREATURE FROM THE LAGOON**.) Castle made their 8mm releases available in



Millicent Patrick creates the unique design of the Gill Man.



A jovial Ben in partial costume.

two versions: a 'Headline Edition' (50 feet of film, which ran approximately three minutes) or a 'Complete Edition' (approximately 200 feet, running about nine or ten minutes).

"To a generation raised in an era when you can readily obtain DVD copies of full-length films, it's difficult to explain the mystique of collecting 8mm movies that were merely fragments of longer pictures. After all, these were silent abridgements, using title cards or superimposed subtitles to convey whatever remained in the storyline. With today's technological advances, comparing 8mm movies to DVDs is like comparing cave paintings to the Internet. Naturally, it wasn't as satisfying as having an entire movie with sound, but in that pre-DVD era, young monster movie fanatics treasured those Castle Film digests. Being able to own even a portion of **CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON** was something quite remarkable."

Due to a decline in his health, especially after major heart surgery, Ben Chapman had regrettably slowed down on the number of conventions he attended, still never ceasing till he could go no more. Ben reflected upon his life in which he considered himself blessed to have been given the life he has led. Through the good

and had, no one deserved more happiness than the gracious Mr. Chapman. He reflected: "I know I'm in failing health but I have no fear of death. The worst thing you can do is have fear of death. We're all going to pass on, so why fear it? It's going to happen, so what you have to do is just be ready, that's all. I have led a very good life. I have done more than the average person can think of, let alone do; I've done it all. I've been with Presidents, I've been with guys in the gutter. I have been from high to low to sideways. I've seen it, I've done it, I've been there. I've been very fortunate throughout my life. I have an old saying from when I was in the Marine Corps: 'I was shot at and shot at and hit both times.' But I'm still here. Of

course, I talk to Dad all the time. Dad to me is God. He is the Father, so I call him Dad. 'Hey Dad,' I go, 'You know Dad, I am ready anytime but I am in no hurry.' I've had a very good life. Truthfully I have. A lot of people ask, 'If you had your life to live over again, would you do it?' And I say, 'Absolutely!' I would relive my life because I've had a good one."

On February 21, 2008 Ben Chapman passed away from congestive heart failure with his beloved Merrilee, and family at his bedside.



Ben Chapman

"DON'T MOURN FOR ME!"

by John Skerchock

"When I die, don't mourn for me," Ben told me once. "Laugh! Celebrate my passing. Remember the fun."

It's hard to do that with a tear in your eye, but when I heard of Ben's passing I honored his request. You see, Ben was all about life. He loved to have fun, and he wanted to affect others with that same joyous spirit that so controlled his soul.

I met Ben at one of the first **CHILLER THEATRE** shows I ever attended, and I liked him immediately. His Hawaiian shirt, short pants, and slippers seemed out of place on a cold October day in New Jersey, but for Ben it was just fine. He always had a smile on his face and he greeted everyone cheerfully.

When I became friends with Danny Roehuck I had joined Ben's extended family. Ben loved Danny and treated him like a son. When he saw Danny and I together, Ben welcomed me to the family like a long lost cousin.

You see Ben had been a retired real estate broker when he was coaxed out of retirement to sign pictures at an autograph show. It was a rewarding experience, but Ben, under an agreement, had to turn over half of his income to the person who brought him to the show.

When Danny got Ben to **CHILLER THEATRE** and refused to take a penny for it, Ben was overwhelmed. Danny always treated Ben like royalty, and Ben reciprocated by unofficially adopting Danny.

It was because of this friendship that I was able to get to know the real Ben Chapman. Ben's philosophy was simple and that was to enjoy life because you never knew how much time you'd have here.

Even in later years when I saw Ben at shows, and he was ailing, he would still have that smile. When we could he'd tell a story or two, and they were the kind you might hear in a barroom or a camp out with your friends. They were, shall I say, somewhat exaggerated. And they were made all the more funny when Danny would mimic Ben as he told one of those whoppers.

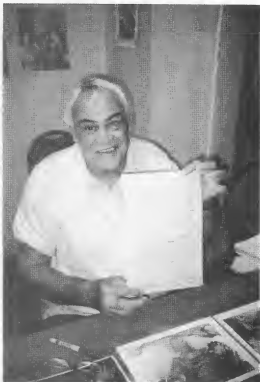
It was some of those stories, though, that helped cement a bond between my Father and I.

I was one of the first people that Ben opened up to about his Korean War experiences. Those early stories were brought back to my Father and he then began to open up and let out things he'd kept bottled up for almost fifty years.

Over the years I shared some pictures of Dad in Korea with Ben. He was genuinely interested in Dad, and that made me feel good.

Of course in company, Ben's Korean War adventures got a little exaggerated. He'd tell them with such flare often giving me a wink or a grin as others listened intently.

Unfortunately some veterans got offended when word came back about Ben's exploits. They were mad that he was



John's first photo of Ben Chapman at **CHILLER THEATRE**.

exaggerating his part in the war. Ben didn't care. He was an entertainer at heart. He wanted his fans and his friends to leave his company feeling good.

When last I spoke to Ben he told me he couldn't come to anymore shows. He was sorry. He wanted so much to tell his fans and friends goodbye, but he no longer had the strength. Years of heavy smoking had taken their toll as they had with my Father. He asked that I tell people goodbye and that he was sorry he couldn't do it himself. "You're a writer. You tell them," he said.

When Danny Roehuck called me and gave me the news I felt the tears well up, but I remembered what Ben had told me one time.

"When I die I'm going to have my ashes dumped in the sea



Ben Chapman and Ricou Browning and THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON.



just like my brother did. My family will have a big luau in my honor and my instructions are that anyone who cries will be kicked out. I want it to be a happy time. I want people to celebrate, get drunk, be happy. I don't want them to mourn because that's not what death is about. I'm just going someplace else. So have fun and remember the good times."

I remember, Ben!



Triumphant Gill-Man, in the movie script, carries Julia Adams to his cave.

After final sketches have been okayed, monster is created in sections. Here feet are plastered.

Eud Westmore, left, and Chris Mueller put final touches to rear section of the monster costume.



Science Creates a Monster

Hollywood has produced some weird costumes
but this \$18,000 horror-suit tops them all.

By Harvey B. Jones

AN ominous order rang through the studios of Universal-International pictures recently: "Gill-Man—report to the underwater tank to test your three heads!"

Accordingly a horrible monster, half man and half fish, lumbered menacingly across the lot, stopped at the huge water tank, poised for an instant and then plunged into the murky depths.

To the casual observer it might have seemed as though the studio was being attacked by a frightful sub-human creature from out of the past but the camera and set crews, producer, directors, actors and script girls all held their ground bravely. Were they too frightened to move? Or did they all know it was a trained monster?

But if that were the case, where had it come from in the first place?

Actually the answer to all these questions is a bit simpler, and certainly less mind-shattering than you might imagine.

The Gill-Man is an ingenious and complicated costume created after eight-and-a-half months' research by Universal-International makeup chief Bud Westmore and his staff. And the creature who lumbered around the lot dressed in this foam-rubber horror is an ex-Marine named Ben Chapman who plays the part of the Gill-Man in the new film, *Creature From The Black Lagoon*, a science-fiction thriller in 3-D.

The story deals with the search for a primitive gill-man, believed to be a living

Plastic material is applied here to the actor to make a pliable mold of Gill-Man's head section.

For many of the scenes in the *Creature From The Black Lagoon*, the whole studio went under water.





Ben Chapman, wearing the completed horror costume, swims here with a peculiar rolling stroke.



In another scene the half-mon half-fish terror is fought off by the hero with a fishing spear.

link with the dawn of time. When a claw is found near a lagoon in the jungles of South America, a group of scientists forms an expedition to see if they can find the rest of the remains. They are never able to locate the missing skeleton but they find a live specimen instead. It is no happy discovery, however, because the beast turns out to be so ferocious that they consider themselves quite lucky to get away with their lives.

The monster costume used for the title role in this film turned out to be the most involved and expensive horror-attire ever devised for a motion picture. When all the designing, modeling and experimentation had been completed, the total cost ran to \$18,000.

Original designs for the weird costume were drawn by Millicent Patrick, a statuesque Hollywood beauty who is both artist and actress rolled up into one. After working for a while for Walt Disney as the first girl animator in history, she was hired to create monsters for Bud Westmore at Universal-International. Some of her horrifying handiwork has appeared in *It Came From Outer Space*, *This Island Earth* and *Sign Of The Pagan*. The Gill-Man is her masterpiece, however. She had to change his shape 76 times before he finally was approved and now, no matter how he scares people, she still thinks he's cute.

But actual designs were just the first step. Once Bud Westmore and Jack Kevan, the well-known makeup artist, got hold of the sketches it was their problem to actually create the monster. In the first place, the costume had to be completely waterproof since most of the action involving the Gill-Man would take place under

water. Then too, it had to be light and flexible enough so that the actor could move easily and with realism in his part. For these reasons it was decided that rubber was the most practical and workable material to use.

They made plaster-of-Paris molds of the actor, dividing this job into sections so that the head, arms, legs, hands, feet, front and back of the torso could be formed separately.

Even with the plaster molds, however, their task was a difficult one. For while they did have a pretty good idea of what their monster was supposed to look like, it was another thing to produce the various parts of the costume separately and still keep them realistic enough and workable at the same time. The webbed feet and hands, for instance, had to be made with special controls so that they would actually aid Chapman in his underwater swimming instead of weighing him down. And the head had to be horrible and prehistoric-looking but pliable enough to show facial expression and allow breathing, and also be watertight. In all, 32 different head models were made before one was finally accepted. Almost 200 lbs. of foam rubber were used in experimental stages before the Gill-Man suit was completed.

The end result of this prodigious labor was one of the most frightening costumes ever to appear on a movie screen. Complete with gills, fins, scales and huge claws, it stands ready and able to scare every youngster in the country, and most adults, out of 15 years growth. It's an underwater Frankenstein in 3-D.

And there's more than one of these monsters, too. [Continued on page 204]

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Science Creates Monster

[Continued from page 78]

Chapman's role in the picture was so strenuous that duplicate costumes had to be made—thus the order for him to come to the studio pool to test his three heads.

But while the Gill-Man may well prove to be the number one movie monster, he was just another actor to the guys and gals on the movie set. All the gals, that is, with the exception of Julia Adams, the only female in the picture. During the filming of a scene in which she was being abducted by the Gill-Man, Julia had her pretty head smacked against a rock when her over-anxious captor cut a corner too sharply while carrying her through an underwater cavern. She was knocked unconscious but the monster didn't realize his own strength so he just kept walking and the cameras kept right on grinding. In fact no one noticed the damage at all until the whole scene had been filmed. Then Miss Adams was rushed to the studio hospital where she was treated for a minor concussion and skin abrasions. She recovered in a few days but from that point on the monster was treated with much more respect and care. *

MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED

THE HOW-TO-DO MAGAZINE

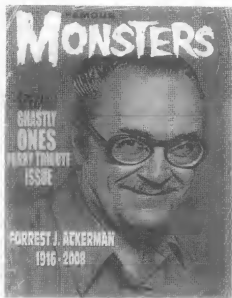


AMAZING MOON FARMS TO BANISH STARVATION
HOW TO BUILD A BATTERY-POWERED SCOOTER

Front cover of MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED May, 1954 issue which contained this article.



MONSTER MEMORIES OF MR. MONSTER



RIP FORRY ACKERMAN Creator of Famous Monsters Magazine. There would be no Ghastly Ones without his influence!

I FIRST HEARD THE NEWS VIA THE INTERNET ON MY SPACE THROUGH MY FRIEND, ROSE. THEN I SENT OUT A NOTICE TO EVERYONE ELSE... AND THE RESPONSE AND THE MEMORIES CAME FLOODING IN. THIS PICTURE WAS SENT IN BY NORM CABRERA OF THE GHOSTLY ONES. NORM SAID HE

SAW FORRY A MONTH EARLIER, VISITING F.J.A. AT HIS HOME.

From:



Date: Dec 5, 2008 10:57 PM

Subject: Forrest J. Ackerman 1916-2008

Body: Forrest J. Ackerman 1916-2008

The legendary Forrest J. Ackerman has passed away. Forry Ackerman was among many, many other things the editor-in-chief of Famous Monsters of Filmland Magazine. Through FM the Ackemonster spread a love for and awareness of classic horror, science fiction and fantasy to LEGIONS of children and adults. I had the pleasure of meeting him at Monster Bash three years ago and consider myself fortunate to have been able to do so.



HE WAS, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR INFLUENCE IN THE LIVES OF ALL OF US MONSTER KIDS EVERYWHERE.

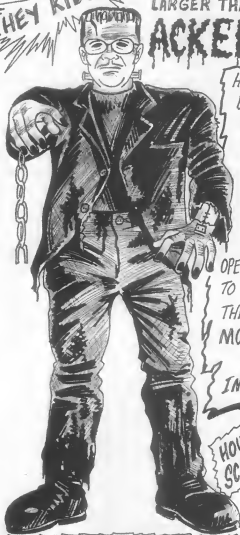
PENNY DREADFULL -
DR. GANGRENE -
THE CAST OF NIGHTMARE
SINEMA- THE 3-D IN-
VISIBLES THE LIST
GOES ON AND ON.....

HEY KIDS!

LARGER THAN LIFE !!!!

WOW!

ACKERMONSTER



HE MAY SEEM TO HAVE
BEEN A LARGER THAN
LIFE CHARACTER IN
THE PAGES OF FAMOUS
MONSTERS.

BUT HE WAS A VERY
APPROACHABLE
PERSON

OPENING THE ACKERMANSION
TO HIS FANS TO SHARE IN
THE WONDERS OF HIS
MONSTROUS MUSEUM
OF

IMAGI-MARVELS!

HOURS OF
SCARY FUN!

WEIRD!!



SCARE YOUR FRIENDS!!!!

SINCE THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH MAGAZINE WAS FROM
THE MAKERS OF F.M.
WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT IF
DR. GAVIN WOULD HAVE BEEN

PLAYED BY
DR.
ACKULA?
JUST
IMAGINE!





HOW MANY OF YOU READERS WERE WARNED BY YOUR PEER'S, "IF YOU KEEP READING THESE MONSTER MAGAZINES, YOUR GONNA TURN INTO A MONSTER!"



Peer of the



GROW YOUNG WITH ME, THE BEAST IS YET TO COME!



THEY SAID THAT LIKE IT WAS A BAD THING! BECAUSE WHEN FORREST J ACKERMAN CAME ALONG WITH FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND, SUDDENLY IT WAS COOL TO BE CREEPY! FORRY MADE IT FUN TO FEAST OUR EYES ON THOSE FRIGHTFULL FLICKS THRU THE PAGES OF F.M. THERE WAS ALWAYS THE JOKES AND PUNS TO GO ALONG WITH THOSE PETRIFYING PIC'S. HE TAUGHT US TO FACE OUR FEARS THROUGH LAUGHTER AND WONDER. AND WE DIDNT FEEL SO BAD ABOUT BEING THE ODD-BALL MISFITS, BECAUSE OF OUR LOVE FOR ALL THINGS SCARY. CAUSE NOW WE KNOW THERES OTHER WEIRDO'S OUT THERE WHO LIKE THIS KINDA STUFF TOO! THATS WHY HE'LL ALWAYS BE OUR...

UNCLE FORRY Dr. Sublime
08

HOW I MET THE MAN BEHIND FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND!

by Daniel Kirk

In 1963, the East Side of Columbus, Ohio seemed like a remote outpost of civilization. As an eleven-year-old kid with a big imagination and a creative spirit, I knew I was growing up about a thousand miles from nowhere. I loved tales of two-fisted heroes, adrenaline-pumped adventure, mystery, intrigue, and travel to exotic locales, even if I was only curled up under the covers of my bed with a book.

My life revolved around books, and I was proud of my ever-growing paperback library. I had a fondness for **TARZAN, FU MANCHU, JOHN CARTER OF MARS** and **CONAN THE BARBARIAN**, with their lurid Frank Frazetta covers. I loved the weird, surrealist images on the covers of the Avon horror paperbacks which my parents thought I was still to young to buy. I subscribed to **MAD** magazine and sought out all the monster magazines including **FAMOUS MONSTERS, CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN, FANTASTIC MONSTERS** and a host of cheaply produced newsprint knock-offs. They were all wonderful to me. On television I thrilled to each bizarre episode of **THE TWILIGHT ZONE**, and an era was dawning in the popular culture that would bring the delights of **THE ADDAMS FAMILY, THE MUNSTERS, OUTER LIMITS, MY FAVORITE MARTIAN**, and endless other fantasy and horror-themed shows. As an adolescent I dutifully assembled and customized all the **AURORA** plastic monster models, bought and traded monster bubble gum cards and lived to stay up late to watch **CHILLER THEATER** each Friday night on channel ten. The reality of school and a safe but boring middle-class lifestyle bore little relationship to the rich fantasy life in which I was immersed. The world in books and movies was wondrous, magical, mysterious and beautiful place, but I didn't think I would ever get to experience any of it firsthand. I was just a kid in the crowd, idly dreaming impossible dreams. I spent endless hours drawing and painting my own monsters, based on the style of the Basil Gogos **FAMOUS MONSTERS** covers I loved so dearly. As much as I loved the content of the magazines, I was drawn to the wild expressionistic horror portraits that graced the covers of FM and peered down at me from the magazine racks of my local drugstore, Cooper's Pharmacy.

I spent my Saturday afternoons at the Southern Theater, downtown, where I saw triple-features of 1950's grade-Z horror and science fiction masterpieces. The ticket price for kids was a whopping 25 cents! I approached the manager, Mr. Ginley, and begged him to tell me where I could get some real monster movie posters to hang on my bedroom walls. Mr. Ginley couldn't get posters for me, but he had file cabinets full

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO MEET THE
EDITOR OF FAMOUS MONSTERS ON HIS
FABULOUS PERSONAL APPEARANCE
CROSS-COUNTRY TOUR!



How Would You Like MISTER
MONSTER IN YOUR OWN HOME?

He, in the 30s Lou Chassy had had a cross-country love, writing his legend of love, hanging his make-up in will love.

19. In the 30s Hugo Borusack had a lot to personally meet 100s of the same religious enthusiasts he had created with his magazines **AMAZING STORIES** & **SCIENCE WONDER**—

IF, in the 40s, Bela Lugosi had donned his vampire cape & you had spent your day to find him standing there, whispering "I am Count Dracula."

IF, in the life, Eric Cartoff had one to your house with time leaves & all printed your copy of "Frankenstein" -
Could it possibly have caused me



100

advertised in FAMOUS

b I would sit in an

wait while he went
s along. When I got

... Jerry Lewis and
... taped them on my
... look and white and

rick. Monsters, and
and imagination they

using the latest issue

to a nine-page article
by J Ackerman. The

Monster Magazine!

The chance to meet Forrest J Ackerman advertised in FAMOUS MONSTERS #24. (© 1963 by Warren Publishing Co.)

of battered paperbacks, and once a month I would sit in an overstuffed armchair in his office and wait while he went through the files to find extra copies to pass along. When I got home and found horror titles in amidst the Jerry Lewis and Elvis movies, I cut out the biggest ads and taped them on my bedroom wall. The illustrations were black and white, and relatively small—but to me, they did the trick. Monsters, and the worlds of fantastical opportunity and imagination they represented, were the center of my life!

One day in the spring of 1963, while perusing the latest issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**, I was drawn to a nine-page article about the life and times of the editor, Forrest J Ackerman. The

Daniel G. Kirk
1255 Marble Drive
Columbus 27, Ohio

Dear Furry, (Oops! I mean Forry)

If you came through Columbus, Ohio, I could have about 20 of my friends here. We could accommodate another 50 of your Columbus fans. My age is 11 and my guests would be from 8 to 12. We live 7 miles east of the center of town. When you arrive in Columbus call Don Kirk at BE 5-4568 and he'll give you directions to get to our house.

We don't have home movies, but wall of ads from press books. I have all the plastic monster models (gorgeously gruesome thanks to my magnificent choice of colors and excellent painting job. I have \$52.00 worth of monster books and magazines, a mummy in a hand made case (the mummy is hand made too), two beasts from the planet Cambridge, an old man's head, and six masks. I was on television last year with my monster collection. My room is so scary that my mother won't come in to clean it. Oh Well! The cob webs from my pet spiders add to the effect.

My family and I have had a spook room at my school carnival for the past two years. We charged 10¢ admission and made over a hundred dollars each year. All this in a period of four hours.

We will serve you a lovely meal when you come.

Here is the menu for Forry's Feast

warm blood soup (98.6°)
moulded salad
Hungarian Ghoulash
Spook-etti
Garlic bread (to keep vampires away. If you eat
enough you'll keep everyone away.)
Devil's Food Cake and I scream (translation- ice cream)

A feast fit for the KING- of all monster and other magazine editors.

I hope I'll be seeing you soon.

Your greatest fan,

article announced an upcoming contest. Forry was planning a cross-country drive to the World Science Fiction Convention in Washington D.C., and wanted to meet some of his fans along the way. There were three possible routes to take, and readers were asked to submit letters to request a personal visit at their homes from Mr. Monster, himself. Depending on the number of respondents and the quality of their letters, Forry would pick a preferred route. I knew I had to enter the contest. I also knew that I would probably never win...things like that didn't happen to kids like me!

I diligently composed a letter explaining why I wanted Forry to visit my home. My dad was also an avid reader of FM and a horror enthusiast, and he helped throw some jokes and puns into my childish invitation. I wrote about what my family would serve Forry for a meal, including spook-etti, molded salad, Hungarian Ghoulash, with Devil's Food Cake and I-Scream for desert. I bragged a little about my collections, including paperback books and magazines worth a grand total of \$52.00! I wrote about how I was anxious to have the opportunity to treat Forry like the king of all monster magazine

Daniel Kirk's letter to Forry inviting him to his house in 1963.

editors.

I mailed the letter. Weeks passed, maybe months. Then one sunny morning the stamped, self-addressed envelope I had sent to Horror-wood Karloff-emia returned to me in the mail. With trembling hands I tore open the envelope to discover that I was a contest winner! The typed form letter informed me that I had been chosen from among the twelve hundred invitations he had received. Forry would be paying ME a visit on the early morning of the 16th of August. His wife, Wendyne Wahman Ackerman would accompany him, and he would be bringing along rare and valuable horror memorabilia to share with me and my friends. I was given a short list of other kids who lived in the Columbus area, and instructed to invite them to my house for the grand occasion. I was in Heaven. My friends at school—those who shared my monstrous enthusiasms—could not believe that Forry Ackerman was going to come to MY HOUSE. I invited all the neighbor kids as well as anyone who had even heard of FAMOUS MONSTERS. My dad invited a

I received invitations to visit over 1200 filmmaker fans!

I AM COMING TO SEE YOU.

I expect to be there FRIDAY, Aug 16 early morning ✓
around noon
afternoon
evening between 5 & 7

Please inform anyone who needs informing NOW. Unless you receive further word from me about 2 hours before I expect to arrive, everything should be going according to schedule and I should turn up about the time predicted.

FLASH! SURPRISE! sendayme ["Rocket to the Rue Morgue"] Vahrman--also known as Mrs Ackerman--will be accompanying me! Two Ackermans for the price of none!!

reporter from the Columbus Dispatch to come and document the event for the newspaper. Preparations began. I arranged and rearranged the monster pictures around my bed for the most impressive effect. My Mom and Dad were always in charge of setting up the annual School Fair Spook House, so we had lots of scary decorations and props at the ready. I was especially proud of the paper mache mummy and sarcophagus we dragged out into the yard, as well as some mutant monster heads I had based on

F A M O U S
MONSTERS covers.
It was Halloween in August! We went to the local camera store and rented an 8-mm projector and some short horror films, including classics like **REVENGE OF THE CREATURE** and **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN**. My mom prepared Spook-etti and made a big chocolate cake with frosting spider webs in Forry's honor.

On the big day, I remember standing in

"Forry Ackerman was going to come to MY HOUSE."

the yard with the photographer from the paper and a crowd of kids, waiting in the sun for Mr. Monster to arrive. The kids from other parts of town were a little rowdy. While we awaited the arrival of our guest, one of the boys decided he was Tarzan, and had a brief swing from the bathroom shower curtain. The fragile aluminum rod snapped out of the wall, and the guilty hooligan was sent outside. The reporter took some pictures of

the waiting kids, but he had another gig scheduled and wasn't able to wait around for the big event.

After what seemed like an eternity, Forry pulled his dusty sedan up in our driveway. He was wearing a snug, short-sleeved shirt and sported his famous pencil-thin moustache. He looked tan and fit, and happy to be standing in front of my home. For the next several hours, I felt like the luckiest kid in the world.

Forry sat on the edge of my Dad's easychair



Forry's arrival in Columbus, Ohio on August 16, 1963 and the welcoming crowd.



Mr. and Mrs. Ackermonger and Daniel Kirk. Note the crown that was presented to Forry upon his arrival for being the King of Monster Magazine Editors!

and showed us his Lugosi cape and big Dracula ring. He held his hand up at eye level while the kids formed a line to examine the gaudy artifact, and *ooh* and *aah* over its strange beauty. He had Lon Chaney's make-up kit, and some behind-the-scenes stills from **KING KONG**. Forry withdrew a plastic-wrapped copy of the first issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** magazine, and we all looked at it like it was Holy Scripture. I had begun my collection with issue number eleven, so to see the first issue in person was quite a thrill. Forry autographed a pile of my back issues of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**. I was a little wary, never having had anything autographed before. I was worried that his signature along the margins of my dog-eared magazines might be considered a detriment to their condition!

We watched a little of **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO** on the folding screen we set up in front of the television, but really, no one paid much attention. We ate the spook-etii on paper plates in the living room, and Forry fielded some easy questions from the fans. My Dad took lots of snapshots with the family camera, and then, with my parent's encouragement, I asked Forry if he would like to see my room.

Upon his arrival at the house, we had



Time for some Devil's Food cake and I -Scream!

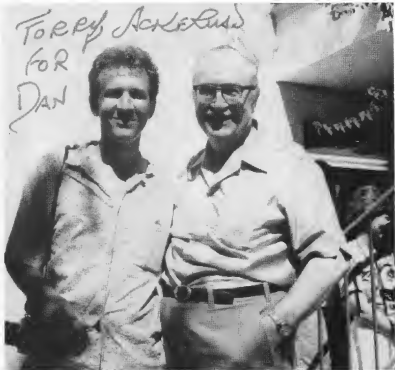
presented Forry with a big jeweled plastic crown. With high good humor he donned the crown and wore it at a jaunty angle, and I remember how odd it felt to usher such an important person into my own little bedroom. King Forry sat next to me on my bed and I showed him my well-loved my meager collections. He looked at my stuff with the same admiration and respect that my friends and I had given him. He took off the plastic crown and put it on my head. Suddenly it dawned on me that I had been inducted into some kind of an exclusive yet informal club, a society of monster-lovers and collectors. I now stood among the ranks of those few privileged individuals who knew and appreciated the true value of things that the "normal people" would never have the pleasure of knowing. I was a true fan.

Through all of this, Forry's wife was a good sport. I think she was given the opportunity to recount an anecdote or two about German silent films like

A black and white photograph of a man and a young boy sitting in front of a wall covered in comic book posters. The man, wearing a white shirt and a paper crown, is smiling. The boy, wearing a patterned shirt, is looking towards the camera. The wall behind them is densely decorated with various comic book posters, including 'WOLF MAN', 'THE MONSTER', and 'THE MONSTER MEN'. A stack of comic books is visible on the table in the foreground.

As artist and illustrator, I came to paint some of the early FAMOUS results, I had a publisher of FAMOUS illustration after many years, and it looked like FAMOUS magazine. Publisher like to commission

Sadly, I did only one other cover for my favorite magazine before I began to realize that Ray Fery was not quite the guy I



The highlight of Daniel Kirk's illustration career was the opportunity to paint covers for FAMOUS MONSTERS #204 and #210 for Forrest Ackerman.

thought he was. His treatment of Forry was deplorable, his handling of the magazine's legacy was shoddy, and it soon became apparent that the new FAMOUS MONSTERS was not ever going to live up to its lofty heritage. Still, I had the honor of working for Forry, and the memories of my brief encounters with my hero. I have often thought about what it means when someone says that somebody is a hero to them. I believe that a hero is someone whose life and works inspired others to make their own lives better, more interesting, more fulfilling—someone who has forged a path we would like to emulate. Forry Ackerman is a man who lived close to the movers and shakers of a world he was passionate about, the world of fantasy and imagination, and he spent the days of his life creatively involved with something he loves deeply. At the same time he has always seemed anxious to share his treasure trove of photographs, stories and artifacts, inspiring and entertaining generations of kids. Who

wouldn't want to be like him?

FORRY Memories

by Robert Martin

It's hard to believe that it was 50 years ago when I first became aware of a gentleman by the name of Forrest J Ackerman. I was 12 years old at the time, when a classmate of mine told me about this new magazine that he had bought with the very catchy title of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**. It was great to have a magazine all about my favorite kind of movies. **SHOCK THEATER** was on TV since September of 1957 and then in September 1958, we got a host, Zacherley "The Cool Ghoul." What a great year 1958 was for a monster kid. Zach was showing us the old monster films and Forry was telling us about them in his magazine. Forry became as much a part of this magazine to we kids, as the monsters that dwelt in its pages. He wasn't known as Uncle Forry for nothing. He set out to teach a whole generation of kids all about the classic monsters of the past as well as what was current and he did a great job from 1958 to 1982.

If you are reading **SCARY MONSTERS**, or as I think of it "*Son of Famous Monsters*," you surely know about FM and like me, probably have a few issues tucked away. Dennis, our current Uncle Forry, has taken the monster fan magazine to its highest level yet. He was of course influenced by FM and others of its kind and "*Scary Dennis*" has surpassed them all. I'm hoping to have many future memories of SCARY, but I want to tell about my memories past of Uncle Forry and about the times I met him.

I had the honor of meeting him twice. First in 1974 at the first FM convention in NYC and then the second (and as far as I know the last in NYC) in 1975. Both at the Hotel Commodore, that no longer exists.

On December 5th I got a text message from my son Roh that read "Forry passed away last night at 92. He went quietly and peacefully among friends." Sad news indeed. Roh had sent me a message a few months prior, telling me that Forry was very ill and fans were requested to send him their best wishes. I did.

My son gets all this info online, but I don't use a computer. He told me there was lots of stuff online about Forry's passing. I was surprised not to have read anything in the papers or have heard nothing on the news about Forry. At least I had sent him that card and told him how much he meant to me all these years and how much it meant to me to have met him twice.

In November of 1974 I went to the first FM Con here in N.Y.C. While roaming around looking at all the cool displays I noticed a small group of people crowded around a man seated in a large chair. It was him, the Ackermanmonster himself. The crowd left and there he was just sitting and waiting. I headed for him,



Forry and Robert Martin meet at the FM convention in 1975.

feeling a bit nervous. He was like a king on his throne, but he quickly put me at ease. "Hi, what's your name?" The ice was broken and I started to chat with my monster hero. He asked if I would like him to sign my souvenir book. Would I ever. He told me that it was near time for makeup wiz Verne Langton to do his magic and transform two people into chimps from the **PLANET OF THE APES**. A line had started to form behind me and though I had a million questions that I wanted to ask him, I shook his hand and thanked him.

"I'll see you around. I hope you enjoy everything, Robert." The rest of the afternoon was great and when I left that day I had talked to Forry and had gotten my first Forry autograph. How cool is that? The next November of 1975 I was back at that same place for FM Con #2. This time I was not alone. My brother and cousin

came along and I had a camera in my pocket. I saw Forry and went over and said hello. I had my pass on my coat and was also wearing the pass from 1974, just to show I was there. "You were here last year too I see. I seem to remember we

1ST 1974 FAMOUS **1ST**
MONSTERS
CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 8, 9, 10, 11, 1974 HOTEL COMMODORE, NEW YORK CITY

SUN. NOV. 10th

WARNING: This ticket is sold legally only at the convention registration area. Not valid if re-sold privately, and admission will be denied in such circumstances.

ADMISSION 8% SALES TAX INCLUDED \$3.00

talked then." It was nice of him to say and maybe he really did remember me. My brother Richard remembered my camera and suggested a photo be taken. I asked Forry if I could get a picture of us shaking hands. "Why of course," he said. My brother snapped our picture and it has been one of my prized possessions for the past 33 years. That night I got to meet Dr. Walt Daugherty FMs photographer and both he and Forry signed my program book. It was a great treat and I looked forward to the next year. Sadly there was no 1976 NYC Con and the 1975 Con was the last one here.



My next Forry encounter was by mail. I ordered a book from the hack pages of FM called **FORREST J ACKERMAN FAMOUS MONSTER OF FILMLAND**. If you ever see this book for sale, get it. It is just fantastic. Anyhow the ad said that it would be personally signed by Forry. It was not. Forry a letter and told him that I did not want to part with the book and perhaps he could just send me an autograph that I could just stick in the book. I did send a few letters over time and a few years passed. Nothing. Then one day a manila envelope comes in the mail from Forry. In it were 2 color 8x10 photos, a 5x7 sketch of him as the Frankenstein Monster and two magazines. One was **PERRY RHODAN** and the other was **SPACEWOMEN**. Every item was autographed to me by Forry. One of the color photos was signed "For Robert Martin, World's Most Patient Man Forrest Ackerman 81." I was floored. What a great collection of stuff. Busy man that Forry, but also a generous soul.

My daughter Colleen and son Rob were raised

FAMOUS MONSTERS CONVENTION

Sunday, November 10

- 11 AM **Film Monsters I Have Known:** The anecdotes and recollections of one Number One monster fan of all time --- Forry Ackerman!
- 12 NOON **Aurora Models:** "The Making of a Model of a Monster" Lady Yancous, research and development department, leads the discussion of how monster kits are developed from the idea to the boxed product.
- 1 PM **Forry Ackerman:** A slide-show lecture tour of Ackermansion.
- 2 PM **Vern Lundson II:** The tricks of transformation: how to un-beautify some members of the audience!
- 3 PM **The Monster Artists:** Basil Gogos! Ken Kelly! The most spirited artists since Gorian Grey sat for his portrait.
- 4 PM **Pre-Costume-Parade Line-Up and Registration (East Ballroom)** Informal picture-taking is allowed and encouraged.
- 4 PM **Auction III:** Among the treasures to be up for the bidding will be a genuine autograph of Bela Lugosi!
- 5 PM **Costume Parade:** They will lurk and ooze past your eyes, In weird and wonderful disguise! (Bring your camera!)
- FILM PROGRAM III:** Even more of the famous flicks of fiendish fame!
- 6 PM **Taste the Blood of Dracula (Christopher Lee)**
- 7:35 PM **Phantom of the Opera**
- 9:08 PM **Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein**
- 10:30 PM **The Creature from the Black Lagoon**
- 8 PM **Son of Ackermansion (West Ballroom)** The further adventures of FJA in his search for the perfect home for a monsterphile!

Monday, November 11

- 12 NOON **Vern Lundson III:** Your final chance to see the Duke of Disguises at work --- all day long, you see!
- 2 PM **Auction IV:** Leftovers, turkeys, bombs, and busts! Try to salvage a prize from this last-day bargain-hunt!
- 3 PM **Ugliest Monster Contest:** Come and make faces, kick over the traces, and show your grimaces! Are you the ugly brute who will be crowned Quasimodo for a day?
- 4 PM **Gripe Session 1974/ Predictions 1975** Get it off your chest! Tell us what you did or didn't like! And let's plan for next year's Convention!
- 5 PM **Convention Closes.**

Thank you for coming and we hope we see you next year!

Here's the program page for Sunday, November 10th, 1974 and some of the things Robert had a chance to see.

So I wrote

on movies. All kinds, but mostly the kind that Uncle Forry told us about and the type that Zacherley showed us on TV. Both work for companies that make movies and TV shows. My Colleen is Associate Director at our local PBS station and Roh is a Supervisor at HBO. They knew about FM their whole lives and they're always been aware of Uncle Forry. I can remember my daughter was mad at me for not taking her to the FM Con in 1975 when she saw the photo of Forry and Roh and she was only 5. I promised to take her in 1976, but alas it never came back to town. It's been a long time since we talked about it and after Forry died, we were talking about it and she asked "daddy, whatever happened to the Ackermansion?" She remembered the place she wanted to visit when she was a little girl. Well,



FAMOUS MONSTERS CONVENTION

1975

PROGRAM

1975 MONSTERCON WORD SEARCH GAME

NAMREKCKAYRROFFFA
OELREHPOTBIRHC
ERROLRETEPAARI
FGODEILLADEMNJS
FNMHUMMYRKMUEYO
OIOOMOTODEHWRNU
LHLTUPRNRNRNRNU
RSFFNMESFICTAAAL
AUMRITIEYDYRCHA
KCAAEELRCINRUCCL
SRNIMELLOBIELNE
IENSTOWARRMNAOB
RTTIFDIRGNIOELC
DLPKINGKONGEOM
BPEGNARTSHWELG

We try to keep to our program, but we would rather go off our time schedule than cut off something good, or eliminate an event. Thanks for being understanding (and adaptable).

Additional events and exhibits will be announced over the speakers, or by posters near the Grand Ballroom entrance.

FRIDAY NOV. 7

- 5:00 PM ALL CONVENTION AREAS OPEN
5:30 FORRY ACKERMAN. Welcoming talk by the editor of Famous Monsters magazine
6:30 THE VAMPIRELLA FILM STORY. Featuring James Warren, publisher of Famous Monsters magazine
8:00 FILM. The Curse of Frankenstein starring: Peter Cushing
9:30 FILM. One Million Years B.C. starring: Raquel Welch
11:00 animation: Ray Harryhausen
FILM. The Reptile starring: Jacqueline Pearce
MIDNIGHT ALL CONVENTION AREAS CLOSE

MONSTERS and
GODILLA
MOTHERA
KING KONG
WARREN
FRANKENSTEIN
SOMBIES
WOLFMAN
MURPHY
OR. CYCLOPS
DRACULA

THEIR MUSES
HAMBUR FILMS
INGRID PITT
PETER CUSHING
PETER LORRE
BORIS KARLOFF
FORRY ACKERMAN
CHRISTOPHER LEE
BELA LUGOSI
GLENN STRANGE
LON CHANEY JR.

EXHIBITS, OTHER AREAS

- CAPTAIN COMPANY Windsor Ballroom/Lobby
SEULING'S SALESMAN Windsor Court
ONLINGER'S MOVIE MERCHANDISE Windsor Terrace
ORIGINAL ARTWORK Windsor Ballroom
RADIO LISTENING ROOM Parlor A/Ballroom Fl.
FILMS, GUESTS Grand Ballroom

who didn't? My son Roh got to see all those old monsters on

my VCR that I got in 1982 when he was just 2. Roh is very into computers and over the years, he was the one who kept me up to date on Forry. He was the one who got me FM when it came back again in 1993 and was my source for all the not so happy news about the Ackermansion and dear Forry's legal troubles. This Christmas he gave me a book by Forry, FAMOUS FORRY FOTOS, chock full of photos from his private collection. Perfect timing.

My kids are true monster kids. I helped them to love movies and I was helped by Forry. He got us to not only love movies, but encouraged us to read books as well. He not only told us about the movies, but also the behind the scenes people who worked making these films.

Forry was fond of saying Lon Chaney shall not die, as a way of keeping his memory alive. Well Lon

Two pages from the 1975 FM con program guide.



(the senior) passed on in 1930 and his memory still remains. I would like to think the same of Uncle Forry. Forry did not believe in the hereafter, but I do. I like to think of him in heaven hanging out with the Chaney's, and Bela and Boris and Vincent etc. Thank you Forry for sharing your love and knowledge of these people and their films with us. Life has been a lot less boring since that 35¢ magazine appeared in 1958 and a whole lot more fun—

SpaceWomen

The Magazine of Outer Space

Space Commander-in-Chief
Forrest J. Ackerman (Editor)



Contents

Welcome to SpaceWomen by Forrest J. Ackerman

A Conversation With The Editor of SpaceWomen by Forrest J. Ackerman

Submission When Published in SpaceWomen

SCARY 70TH TRIBUTE ISSUE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON! 060 SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE A Real Monster Magazine!

FORRY TRIBUTE LETTERS AND MORE FROM THE MOVIE MONSTER MUSEUM.COM

Hommage 4E Ackerman.

I've done my share of horror fables, some were meant to be some variant. Some actors so connected in the public mind found the disconnection - I did and I don't. All of us have done other things many of which were more pleasing than the horrors but what the public knows where demands a certain amount of gratitude from all of us. The public can forget so easily.

Now there are people who's role in life is to perpetuate the public's memory in certain way, specific arenas of every field grandeur - some do it with a heavy hand and so with a touch of genius. Some even combine genius with humor. And they are the very special few. To name the one, specific, unique, all by himself, we must come up with the name of Forry Ackerman. He is a gentle wit, full of fun and funniness. He lives a great life is not above ~~praising~~ treating us to some shocking punning. He wrote me that, Twenty seven years ago I brought forth upon this continent a genre magazine conceived in jeopardy and almost - ended to the proposition (13) that all monsters are cremated evil". Now you see what I mean... am not even the slightest apology to Lincoln.

Quite seriously, Forry has undidled, peened, faked, and ~~consciously~~ consciously guided his way into millions of young hearts. To appear on a cover of his magazine is to become immortal in a rather ghastly way. The recipient of the Forry honor can be sure of thousands of imitations. ~~He or she~~ He or she to be a place in the make up of many Hall of Fames. They become collectors items and are framed, hung, ~~and~~ almost worshipped throughout Monsterland. Forry's Lucas King Spunk was all over him some of their devoted followers. Single handed

Advised by

This is the handwritten HOMAGE 4E ACKERMAN written by Vincent Price and used for the Introduction to FORREST J ACKERMAN, FAMOUS MONSTER OF FILMLAND book and mailed to IMAGINE, INC. on March 24, 1986. (Letter courtesy of Dennis L. Phelps and the Movie Monster Museum)

he has kept alive many a lessening legend putting them under his dart of ghost writers at the heading of his always imaginative stationery. Ted Browning, George Tuco, Jack Pierce as well as the obvious great Charlott Tress etc.

On a personal note he is a great and loyal friend and career supporter. When you're with Torrey or T.E. and his enchanting wife Wendayne at a movie opening or film festival as I was two years ago in Madrid, or at some especially enchanted Hollywood affair you know you're on the company of royalty. In his Kingdom of the Bizarre, weird and wonderful he is ~~supreme~~ ~~supreme~~ supreme ruler. Keep of the keys to monster immortality. He pictures himself crowned with Jack Pierce's famous top part of Frankenstein's monster head.

Torrey has made monsters fear, conspirers good company. His address in Hollywood Karloffonia has become a mecca for young monster lovers and serious students of one of the oldest cinema genres. He is a collector extraordinaire or he truly collects extraordinary things and has made the grand gesture of giving it to the City of Los Angeles which with its typical lack of concern for an industry that has made it famous still doesn't have a place to ~~put~~ house it.



Vincent Price wears Bela's **PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE** cape. (Photo courtesy of Dennis L. Phelps and the Movie Monster Museum)

The Vincent Price Forry Tribute Letter concludes on the next scary page...

Eventually, he and his collection will
become monuments to a (but for him)
much neglected cinema art form.
We all owe him a great debt for keeping
alive his favorite genre of movies but
preserving its mementos - we should
thank him for his fun, devotion, and
generous giving of it to his avid public.
His fans are legion

Vincent Price

Sorry I could get this
typed - would appreciate
you acknowledging receipt
of it, and if you have any
questions call 213 271 7869



Visit the Movie Monster Museum at:
www.moviemonstermuseum.com

You may be able to purchase this actual
letter or other Forry relics.

FORRY DAYS

by Deborah Painter, Arlene Domkowski, Jeff Barnes and Courtney Skinner
(From Deborah Painter, author of *Hollywood's Top Dogs: the Dog Hero in Film*, as well as an upcoming biography of Forry, and proud long time contributor to *Scary Monsters*.)

I hung out with someone who loved to sing this Al Jolson number:

Though April showers may come your way,
They bring the flowers that bloom in May.
So if it's raining, have no regrets,
Because it isn't raining rain, you know, (It's raining violets.)

And where you see clouds upon the hills,
You soon will see crowds of daffodils,

So keep on looking for that blue bird, And list'n'ing for his song.
Whenever April showers come along.

Some of the happiest parts of my visit to Los Angeles were the times, toward the end of the day, when we fans would take Forrest J to the post office and then to dinner. He had made the wise decision to stop driving soon after he entered his eighties. We would be in the car, usually with about two other fans, making our way through parts of the Los Feliz neighborhood of Los Angeles, and FJA would point out the former home of some important author or director and would be interspersing his narrative with an Al Jolson song.

Other memorable times during visits to Hollywoodland, just as special as getting John Landis' or Mike Jittlov's or Carla Laemmle's autographs while attending one of Forry's FANTASTIC Hollywood parties on his birthday, or picking him up at the hotel after he attended the star studded Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films' Saturn Awards in 2001, or the rougher times for Forry, helping out when he had the "Dr. Acula" trademark court case in 2000, were the fun times spent vacuuming. Vacuuming floors is one of those necessary but blah chores... unless one is vacuuming the floors at the Ackermuseum. Forry didn't tell me to do it... I asked him! While vacuuming I could see the costume worn by actress Talisa Soto in *VAMPIRELLA* and the black top hat and vampire teeth worn by Lon Chaney Senior in *LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT* and the "metallic" protective armor worn by Boris Karloff as the obsessed scientist in *THE DEVIL COMMANDS*. After I finished, FJA would take me to lunch as payment.



THE VANISHING BODY was an alternate title for the RKO Karloff and Lugosi team-up, **THE BODY SNATCHER**, and Forry has this theater banner displayed in his "Karloff-Lugosi" Room at Son of Ackermansion. (Photo courtesy of Michael Ramsey)

In the downstairs library and office were some of the highlights of his collection. At his request, some friends and I went through his book in the office level where the **AMAZING STORIES** and **THRILLING WONDER STORIES** were carefully kept in archival sleeves and the **KING KONG** models were displayed, and we spent about a day counting the titles in each of the categories in the Ackermansion library. Now, Forry had the books categorized. He just wanted someone to inventory them. It wasn't exactly the Dewey Decimal system; it was the Forry Decimal system. On one shelf were all the books that were at one time or another made into films. And on a nearby shelf were novels about Atlantis. There, in that shelf across the way, were the Tom Swift science fiction books for kids, beginning in 1910 and continuing to the 2000s. "Mr. Sci-Fi" also had bookshelves that slid in front of other shelves and those moveable bookshelves were floor to ceiling with books, just as were the ones affixed to the walls. And he read every last word! Whenever he got a new book, he said, he would turn to the last page and read the last word.

The Son of Ackermansion had lots of bathrooms and most had their own shower stalls and tubs. The place had been built originally in the 1920s and was the home of actor Jon (HURRICANE) Hall for a time. Well, off to one side of one bookcase, on the side of the house facing the backyard patio and a ravine was a little bathroom that Forry called "Odd John." He called it that because of a science fiction story, *Odd*

John, penned by Olaf Stapledon, concerning a sort of higher evolved fellow named John who had large eyes and a much better brain than average.

The Odd John was not needed since the Ackermans had always had plenty of tuhs in this mansion, and it had been thoroughly converted into a storage place for some cool things, now in a jumble. I asked Forry if I could help him out with straightening and he said this room needed to be cleared out. I found cover proofs of issues of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** from the 1960s and 1970s with the tops removed. I also found a photo Forry had somehow misplaced, of him posing with a man whom I did not recognize. I showed it to him and he identified him as one of the child actors in **METROPOLIS**. Forry had visited Germany some years back and there had been a reunion of surviving cast members! He was glad to see this photo once more.

And you never knew who was going to drop by the house! On my most recent visit in November 2008 actress Candy Clark, David Bowie's leading lady in **THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH**, stopped by to see Forry, as did Lee Harris, narrator and host of **FLYING SAUCERS OVER HOLLYWOOD, THE PLAN NINE COMPANION**, and voice artist for various productions. I was also pleased to see another of Forry's close pals, film music supervisor Sean Fernald, whose credits include **WHITE ON RICE, COSMIC RADIO**, and **DEAD AND DEADER**. Sean is also co-producer, along with Joe Moe, of **RED VELVET**.

Much has been written by myself and others about Forrest J Ackerman's amazing homes and collection of paintings, stills, lobby cards, props, magazines, books and fanzines, which Ray Bradbury has called "the most interesting house in the world." However, you don't mind if I talk about them a bit more, do you? There were three Ackermansions in L.A. The first was on Sherbourne Drive and the second was the Son of Ackermansion on Glendower Avenue, where Forry and Wendy moved in the 1970s. The Ackermansmansion on Russell Avenue was the most recent. Every one of them was open at certain times and dates for tours since 1951 when a visitor from Belgium had made the suggestion to Forry and Wendyne, his loving wife. She enjoyed movies (and wrote about a few herself) and traveled overseas with him to many a film festival and convention. **LIFE MAGAZINE** even ran a photo of a quite young (35 year old) Forry Ackerman seated in front of some of his **THRILLING WONDER STORIES** magazine collection at the Sherbourne address, for a piece about his being named Guest of Honor at England's First International Science Fiction Convention. It's reproduced in Forry's book from James A. Rock Publishing, **FAMOUS FORTY FOTOS**. I have reviewed this book here in the pages of **SCARY MONSTERS** (#44, September, 2002) and I recommend it as a primer for anyone who wants a basic Forry education. Dennis Druktenis, the publisher and editor of this magazine, published many reviews David Hawk and I did for Forry's recent anthologies as well as completely original works, like **FORREST J ACKERMAN'S WORLD OF SCIENCE FICTION AND LON OF 1000 FACES, SCARY MONSTERS** #40, the September 2001 issue, ran these two. It was a privilege for us to do them. Dennis also published our coverages of several of Forry's birthday parties.

Forry Ackerman was interviewed for dozens of documentaries about science fiction, classic horror and even film preservation.



LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT is a lost film but Forry owned the beaver hat and the false vampire teeth Chaney Sr. wore in the MGM horror-mystery. (Photo courtesy of Deborah Painter)

He knew many stars in the science fiction world and visited the Soviet Union when the latter was still Communist, to spread American good cheer and science fiction. He did like to wax enthusiastically about himself, and please remember, there is nothing wrong with healthy self promotion, especially when one is involved in the media as a career! Without its authors, film historians and actors will not make much of an impression and few people will see their work. He served as a living example for us. Seldom does one encounter a person quite like Forry, a big egocentric, with a core of huge goodness and generosity. I would do two nice things for Forry and he would do four nice things for me. Then, I would do four nice things for Forry and he would do five nice things for me.

There were plenty of things I learned from FJA and here is one of the most important: that one could be a BIG SHOT in the world without stomping on others. You have heard the world saying that good guys finish last. Not cursing, smoking or drinking, and taking care of your mom and aunt in their old age, speaking softly, and promoting other people's work, means you will vanish from the celebrity scene, we are told. I found this to not be true whenever I looked at Forry. Why,

most of the time, when I looked at Forry, I saw dozens of his admirers and his fellow professionals crowding about him. We never tired of learning from this great one. How often do you meet someone who is not only an agent, archivist, storyteller, author, historian and influential collector, but an active MOVIE ACTOR, for Heaven's sake?

When many people reach the age of sixty-five, they say, "OK, it is time to retire and rest on my laurels." Then they fish and take their ease. Forry actually increased his productivity at that age, writing even more, going to even more film festivals, visiting even more historic sites like the home of H. G. Wells in England, and appearing in even more cameos in films. I never thought of Forry as old. Forry aged physically but not mentally. He usually had that mischievous twinkle in his eye and was almost always ready with a quip. He didn't sit around grouching about high taxes, failing health and "those kids today." And young people loved that. Young filmmakers would invite him to be in their own movies like **THAT LITTLE MONSTER**.

TIME MAGAZINE finally got around in mid December 2008 to running a small piece in its "Milestones" section about FJA. Of course, by then Prince Siriki had come to escort Forry to a realm where he could have a break for a while from all the personal appearances, writing, and autograph signing and being interviewed for documentaries. Because of this, I must wait for the wheel of life to continue to turn and I must be patient while it does. It is hard. Al Jolson sang of this...

When there are grey skies,
I don't mind the grey skies.
You make them blue Sonny Boy.
Friends may forsake me.
Let them all forsake me.
I still have you Sonny Boy.

You're sent from heaven
And I know your worth.
You made a heaven
For me here on earth



It's a little Kong! One July 1986 day, one of Forry's actress friends came by on her way home and brought over a woolly monkey she used in her Rainbow Brite performances.



Wendy Ackerman, Forry's late wife, is here pictured in a large poster which Forry displayed in his home at all times. (Photos courtesy of Deborah Painter)

When I'm old and grey dear
Promise you won't stray dear
For I love you so Sonny Boy.
And the angels grew lonely
Took you because they were lonely
I'm lonely too Sonny Boy.

(FORRY DAYS furnished by Arlene Domkowski, associate publisher of SCARLET: THE FILM MAGAZINE.)

O h...Memories of Forry...where to start?

I guess the one that always comes to the forefront is from wayy back. I sent 4E a long letter on the occasion of FM's 100th issue. And I received one of those Forry phone calls at my parent's home. I could only stutter for at least five minutes until I came back to earth and could actually have a respectable conversation. I was on cloud nine for days! Even my mother who was always waiting for me to "out grow" my penchant for horror films was impressed.

As the years went by, I had the honor to spend some time with Forry now and again. I even wore his Dracula ring during one memorable dinner. But if I want to go back to a perfectly happy place, I conjure up that summer's day when he called.

(Jeff Barnes works in the audio-visual department of West Virginia University and is a writer. He has been a monster kid since childhood because he was born on Halloween and corrupted by his older sister. He writes:)

Forry has been an influence on my life from the time I was around 6 years old. I can't imagine what childhood would have been like without **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**. Thanks to Forry I not only learned more about the monster movies I loved but also became an avid reader of horror and science fiction. My love of Ray Bradbury, H.P. Lovecraft, Robert Bloch, Robert E. Howard, Edgar Rice Burroughs and H.G. Wells I credit to Forry.

Though I had loved and appreciated the man for years, I never actually met Forry until I was in my 40s and one of the great thrills of my life was sitting next to him at breakfast one morning at the 2004 **MONSTER BASH**. He admired the **ROBOT**

YOU ARE IN THE FUTURE BEFORE IT HAPPENS!



THE TIME TRAVELERS was a 1964 American International release featuring Forry in a role as a robotics technician with a line that is an in-joke to readers of Warren Publishing Company's **SPACEMEN**.

MONSTER t-shirt I was wearing, which pleased me to no end!

I only met him a couple more times after that but I still count myself lucky to have met him at all. I just can't imagine life without Forry. If not for his influence I might have turned out to be...horror of horrors...normal!

Thank you, Uncle Forry, for saving me from that dreaded fate!

Science fiction author Anthony Boucher once said that if



Some of the awards bestowed upon Mr. Ackerman included the Burroughs Bibliophiles Award, a Hugo, and Count Dracula Society Awards. (Photos courtesy of Deborah Painter.)

Forry had never existed, it would have been necessary to invent him. I know exactly what he meant!

(Cortney Skinner is a digital painter and a special effects designer with many delightful fantasy and science fiction films to his credit. Two are **DARK AND STORMY NIGHT**, due for release in 2009, and **THE LOST SKELETON OF CADAVRA**.)

My memory of Forry...

This memory is nothing very unique, and I'm sure it's something which Forry did countless times over the decades. I was at St. Louiscon in 1969, my first World SF convention and my first con ever. Attending the con was FJA who to me was the biggest celebrity there since I had been reading **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** since its beginning. FMF was the inspiration for my best friend, Geary Gravel and I to draw our own monster magazine in the early 60's, 'Igor's Corner' ...literally illustrated with cutout photos take from FMF.

Geary and I both attended St. Louiscon. We were walking down one of the hotel staircases hustling with convention attendees and there I saw Forrest J Ackerman himself. I had purchased two issues of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF**



(Above) **VAMPIRELLA** original comic panels from early **VAMPIRELLA** comic books. Forrest J Ackerman created **VAMPIRELLA** for Warren Publishing. (Photo courtesy of David Hawk)

(Below) A typical tour of the Ackermuseum included Forry showing off to lucky visitors a cape Bela Lugosi wore in his stage performances as Dracula. (Photos courtesy of Deborah Panter)

FILMLAND in the huckster's room for the express reason to see if FJA might autograph them. I got up my courage and asked tentatively if he might autograph each one. He paused right there on the stairway and took the time to leaf through each magazine to find an appropriate place to write one of his famous puns next to a photo of himself. With a big smile he handed the magazines back to me and thanks me for being a **FMF** reader.

Nothing very unique there at all but it meant a great deal to me. I still have those issues of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**. I could have summarized all of this in one sentence but I was reminiscing as I wrote this, and I have a little lump in my throat and a bit of mist in my eye. Bye, Forry.



FUN FORRY FACTS to Know and Tell



by Lee Harris

Forry watched the filming of the motorboat scene in *Blonde Venus*, 1932 with Marlene Dietrich. In one of his oft-told stories, in the boat with Marlene "was a young actor, don't know if anything ever became of him—Cary—Cary Grant?" Forry was in Los Angeles spending the summer with his grandparents, the summer before his senior year at Balboa High School in San Francisco.

Forry's movie debut was in *Hey Rookie*, a 1943 film with Joe Besser, Ann Miller, and future *Jolson Story* star Larry Parks.

When Forry arrived in New York for the first World Science Fiction Convention in 1939, sixteen year old author Cyril Kornbluth asked him "Are you Forrest Ackerman who writes those letters to the science fiction magazines?" Forry said that he was, and Kornbluth punched him in the stomach. Forry's only comment—"Welcome to Fun City."

MAMMY! Show business reigns—Lee Harris and Forry. Christmas 1998. Burbank.

Awaiting a 1950s television appearance in the "green room," Forry struck up a conversation with a young man whom he described as very polite, with a southern accent. The young man was Elvis Presley, and he would later give a tour of his famous collection to The Cramps, and become good friends with musician Ogre of the group Skinny Puppy.

Forry's family (Mom, Dad, brother) practiced nudism in their home, while at the same time telling him that sex was dirty and led to disease. As a result, he was a virgin until age 32, when future wife Wendy got a hold of him. One time at lunch, he parodied his famous story of his discovery of *Amazing Stories* with "Well, I wasted the first 32 years of my life..."

One day at Universal in the 1930s, he crushed shoulders with Colin Clive, and viewed Clive in his casket after his 1937 death.

ACK-lecture—Forry's maternal grandfather, George Herbert Wyman, designed the famous Bradbury Building in downtown Los Angeles, seen in *Bladerunner* and the *Demon with a Glass Hand* episode of *The Invaders*. He later lived directly down the hill from the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Ennis-Brown house, which served as Harrison Ford's hideout in *Bladerunner*, as well as *The House on Haunted Hill* with Vincent Price.

Forry could never stand *Forbidden Planet*, 2001 *A Space Odyssey*, or eggs for breakfast. I once called him and sarcastically crowed that a restored 70mm 2001 was screening soon, and he said "The smaller, the better."

In his twenties, he worked for the Academy, and was backstage guarding all those Oscars for *Gone with the Wind* at the 1940 Awards (honoring the films of 1939).

Forry was in attendance in March 1957 at the long-gone Carlton Theater, on Vermont Avenue in Los Angeles, at the premiere of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. It was the film's only screening under its original title *Gravereobbers from Outer Space*.

In the 30s and 40s, Forry was "always good for a huck a hook"—if you brought him a sci-fi or fantasy hook that he didn't have, he'd happily give you \$1 for it. Young Ray Bradbury was often a beneficiary of this policy, and needing money for an especially hot date one time, brought 4c an Edgar Wallace (*King Kong* author) "autographed" edition that he stated was worth \$2. In the fifties, a successful author and conscience-stricken, Ray brought Forry another Wallace hook signed "The Real Edgar Wallace."

There was a hook in Forry's collection whose title escapes me, whose cover had a caved-in depression, with equally concave pages inside. Forry showed the hook off at open houses, claiming it had been struck by a torpedo in World War 2, until collector and historian Ron Borst discovered that it said COPYRIGHT—1952.

ACK-DRESSES! 5237 Virginia Ave., Los Angeles (1920s), 530 Staples Ave.,

San Francisco (late 20s—mid 30s), 236 ½ N. New Hampshire, Los Angeles (mid-30s through WW2 army induction), 915 S. Sherbourne Dr., Los Angeles (original Ackermansion), 2495 Glendower Ave., Los Angeles (Son of Ackermansion, 1973-2002), 4511 Russell Ave., Los Angeles (Acker "mini-mansion," 2002-2008). This roster is far from complete, and only the Sherbourne house no longer exists.

Forry was friends with filmmaker and *Hollywood Babylon* author Kenneth Anger from 1942 onward, and the last 4e-edited Warren FAMOUS MONSTERS (#190) is dedicated to him. They met at a little place on Hollywood Blvd. which screened silent films, where another frequent attendee was D.W. Griffith.

My late start may make me a piker to many Scary Monsters readers. I first spotted FAMOUS MONSTERS in November 1969, when I entered a

ReXall drugstore in Adrian, Michigan to escape the freezing cold of my paper route. That was issue number 62, with the Basil Gogos rendering of Fredric March as Mr. Hyde. Next to its synopsis in my copy of the 1991 volume Forrest J Ackerman: Famous Monster of Filmland #2, it says "The issue that started you on the road to ruin. I apologize!—Forry."

At two minutes before midnight on Thursday, December 4, 2008, Forry went to Metropolis. Though I share his atheism and belief that there is no survival of the personality after death, we know he went to Metropolis, and that his personality will go on and on.

LEE HARRIS is a Hollywood voice actor whose credits include *Men in Black*, *The Horror Show*, *Deathstalker II*, Paul Davids' *The Sci Fi Boys*, *Virus* (dubbed Donald Sutherland), and *Blood Salvage* in which he provided the voice of Elvis' corpse.



3 cents Edgar Allan Poe stamps from FJA's office stamp collection courtesy of Lee Harris, circa 1948 or 1949.



"Uncle Forry" *or the man who inspired the Scary Monster kids!*

by Kent R. Daluga

Greetings all and as I sit here on the eve of another year, I think back on the last 15 years. That's how many it's been since I got to meet 4SJ at the **FAMOUS MONSTERS** convention in Virginia when I went with Dennis to promote this magazine. As we entered the convention center to be part of something special and make some \$ to continue the journey of this the "Only Real Monster Magazine." There was "Uncle Forry" holding court in the lobby!

I remember being just one of thousands that weekend hoping to meet the man and get his autograph, well as the first night ended I would be by Forry's side til I walked him to his room and hid him a ghoul evening. The next morning tired and still in awe of the close encounter of the 4SJ kind...we would meet again.

The next time was at the **FAMOUS MONSTERS** convention on the left coast with Scary Friends Walt Haussner, Jack Berlin and of course Dan Brigham. Dennis was busy with the family and running the magazine and so I did my best to promote "SCARY" alone...not an easy job without the man. At this time we got to go to the Ackermansian and video it and

interview Forry for all who could not be present and accounted for. He was in fine form as he lead us thru this maze of monsterdom and into the hell that was grislyland, the space below the house that 4SJ built.

The next 3 Acker-monster meetings would be in California, Arizona and in Chicago...maybe one more in there somewhere but not sure of the details at this stage of my life? When Walt would be married in Arizona, he invited Forry and Forry came to the wedding and stayed for the weekend and what a great time that was! Traveling to the desert at sundown and sitting next to him at the ceremony and of him telling stories of Jim Warren and **FAMOUS MONSTERS**. This was of course the man who met and befriended Chaney, Price, Lee, Cushing, Karloff, and also Lugosi and Carradine.

While with my father at a model and movie convention in Chicago I would be with the two men who created the monster/sci-fi/fantasy fan I would become. I crashed Forry's lunch of shrimp salad to tell him of my father and Uncle Bob watching the Classic Universal Monsters at the movies and on **SHOCK THEATER** on TV. And that my dad started it for me and

Kooky Kavanen Kent meets Uncle Forry again at Walt's wedding in Arizona.





Forry kept it aglow all those years later.

I would meet him once again when Walt and his sister Carmen and I would meet to tour the Ackermanson and check out locations of studios and sites of monster films (**THE SPIDER, TEENAGE WEREWOLF, BODY SNATCHERS**). Once again Forry ever the host took a group thru the halls and rooms of his home and spoke the well told tales of who and how he became the curator of the finest collection of its kind anywhere. Ever the ladies man he was of course enchanted by Carmen and her beauty...can't blame him as she was very lovely, smart and charming.

As I said earlier, there might be one more time in Chicago I met Forry but not sure of the details. Maybe another model/toy convention?

I know he came to the city for the now defunct **HOUSE OF MONSTERS** and he loved it according to Barry Kaufman and Damian of that store. I sure miss that store and will forever hold tight to those **MONSTER MEMORIES!** As you can see in the photos I got to wear the Lugosi "Dracula" ring and be in

Look into my eyes! SUBSCRIBE to SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE Today! So says Kount Kookula..

the presence of this wonderful, gracious and kind man 5 or 6 different times. Did I know the private Forry or the public Forry? I'm sure it was the public one and maybe a tiny bit of the private one. I'm sure that he signed 100's of thousands of autographs in his time and made every one he met feel like he was your uncle/friend who liked monsters and was proud of that fact.



I know many who feel the same of Dennis and feel the happiness that being part of something special can bring...I know I do! Until next time, thanx for being part of **SCARY MONSTERS** and send in those articles so you can be a Scary Kid of the monster kind and thanks to Walt Haussner for taking all those wonderful pix!!

P.S. May the gods bless you Forry and keep you and Wendayne safe until the end of days.

Beast,
Kooky Kaveman Kent



Dear SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE,

—(Continued from page 16)

Dear Dennis and Sam:

I am greatly saddened by the death of Mr. Monster himself, Forrest J Ackerman. Like many "monster kids" of my generation (the mid-to-late sixties), I discovered FM and FJA via a tattered copy of #32 sold to me by a friend (fiend?) for the ridiculous sum of twenty-five cents—half my weekly allowance!

Although it was Joseph Stefano's weekly TV creature-feature **THE OUTER LIMITS** that introduced me to monsterdom, it was Uncle Fory and **FAMOUS MONSTERS** that cemented my fascination with all things otherworldly.

Fory's quick wit and love of language exhibited a certain genius for seizing on the extraordinary and making it extra-extraordinary. This genius was admittedly often overextended, as in his simultaneous helmsmanship of FM and the short-lived **MONSTER WORLD** in the mid-sixties (what better competition for a Warren horror magazine than another Warren horror magazine?). This led to reams of reprints, leaving one to wonder if one or both publications were recycling material into oblivion. Now we have Ferry instead of Fory, but it just isn't the same.

There have been many notable "classic" monster magazines, each having its own merit. But each and every one of them owes its existence to FM and its trailblazing editor.

Thank you, **SCARY MONSTERS**, for carrying on for 45J, and—dare I say it?—improving upon his original idea.

TOM PREHODA Schenectady, NY

Greetings Dennis & the Scary Monsters Gang,

Firstly, many thanks for continuing the tradition of publishing *A Real Monster Magazine*. This is a feat in itself, especially in this day and age of digital information. I and many other fans undoubtedly thrill to discover the latest issue which you and the staff produce on a regular basis. It's a feeling that started for me those many years ago when in 1973 I first discovered **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**, originally published by James Warren and edited by Forrest J Ackerman.

Secondly, it is greatly appreciated that the **SCARY 70th TRIBUTE** Issue will pay tribute to the Ackermonger in the fittingly appropriate form of your magazine. Like so many of the magazine pioneers who brought us the photos, stories, and enjoyment of reading and collecting, FM was for me the springboard and the showcase for everything monsters, science fiction and fantasy. With Fory's encouragement in almost every fun-fear-packed issue, I finally obliged and sent in my own hand-drawn, prediction of a future FM cover featuring a portrait of Dr. Ackula decked out in the famous count's garb, holding a wax-dribbled candle, proudly sporting the Transylvanian-crested ring. This led to a fan dedication in issue #172 and a personal phone call from Hollyweird,

Karloffornia one evening in 1981. It was one of those fan dream-come-true moments that thrilled and left a memorable impression of the man known as Uncle Fory.

Over the next several years, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the Ackermansion several times when traveling out to the west coast on vacations. On two occasions, I returned the gesture of the issue dedication and many years of reading enjoyment by taking Fory out to lunch and dinner...to say the least it was an honor and personal high to dine with Mr. Monster himself!

It is apparent that from these many moments to remember as well as the many others from fans around this planet, we had the unique opportunity to have known and enjoyed his many contributions to the genre. One of Fory's favorite sayings, "Sci-Fi shall not die," could be amended to also read, "Sci-Fi shall not die because FJA is the reason why." Thanks so much to the "moonbeam smile" that will shine on!

Sincerely,

DAVID PALEN Salem, MA

Hi Dennis—

Sorry this is late, but I just found it.

I always found this photo humorous and shows typical Fory. I guess it should be titled, "THE POWER OF DRACULA'S CAPE."

Here Fory demonstrates that a mere mortal (me) will gain incredible power, just by putting on Lugosi's Dracul cape. He literally falls to his knees in submission in this 1986 photo...I was on my honeymoon with my wife, or as FJA called it, my **HOLLYWOOD HORROR MOON!** After the visit, he took us to a favorite smorgasborg for a honeymoon feast.

Hope you like the pic...

Best always,

"**MONSTER BOB**"
MORRIS



My fondest memories of Forrest J Ackerman...

My best memory is of course when I started collecting **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** magazine.

It all started in 1960 when I bought my first **FAMOUS MONSTERS**.

I can't remember what issue it was but I went crazy.

Wow, what a magazine.

Great covers, great pictures and articles.

THIS ISSUE DEDICATED TO



DAVID PALEN

The drawing above is a self-portrait of talented artist Dave who cracked your offer up (as if he wasn't cracked enough already) by creating his concept of the cover of **FRANKBOOK 2001**. Only 20 years to go to see if Dave's prophecy is accurate!

I loved the cover art the best and I still do. I was really into Monster Collecting and I'm now 57, and I still collect.

I was really sad to hear that Forrest passed away at 92 recently. I really wish I could have met him in person and gone through the Ackerman mansion.

My fondest memory of Forrest was when I tracked down his home phone number in Los Angeles.

And I got to talk to him personally for about 45 minutes.

He told me about his life, his career.

And we also talked about Elvira, Mistress of the Dark.

My friend, Mike Gelino actually got to meet him in person.

Forrest made a special appearance at one of our local spook houses on Halloween.

I'm glad to have known him.

And what an honor to have talked to him from his home in Los Angeles.

He put out one great magazine.

Wherever you are Forrest.

Keep on scarin'.

LAYNE TAYLOR Salt Lake City, UT

To the cool ghouls at SCARY MONSTERS MAG...

In Diamond's new catalog, saw your tribute to Forry Ackerman issue coming up. Thank you guys for celebrating Forry's life, as he meant so much to the Little Monsters generation. Did some artwork for friends after Forry's passing, and they suggested I share it (pictured below). Been an artist and hookdealer for over 25 years, and the times with Uncle Forry at conventions over the years are some of my most cherished memories. When I met him back in the 80s, he



autographed my FAMOUS MONSTERS #1 to me, and after only a few minutes I realized how much he loved not only collecting, but his fans.

I airbrush t-shirts and do portraits, so I decided to paint the Ackermonger on a large t-shirt and send it to him. The next year at Dragon Con, a hand on my shoulder, a classic Frankenstein growl, as I slowly turned around, there was Forry, wearing the T-shirt I made for him, calling me by name with a classic pun! I couldn't believe that after all the tens of thousands of famous and infamous people he'd met over the years, that he'd remember a single fan! That's the kind of man he was!

The last time I saw him, he got a look at a sketch of a 20 x 30 painting I was working on with him surrounded by 30 classic monsters and actors. He looked at the sketch like a happy child who just saw his picture with someone famous, and said "nice to see tributes while I'm still alive...save it till later, after all he was 80 years young. Friends are now after me to finish the painting and make poster copies.

Anyhow, looking forward to your Ackermonger tribute issue, have ordered multiple copies for friends. Keep up the great work...keep the Universal Monsters alive, and thank you for adding Forry to the greats that will live Forever!!

Sincerely,

EARL CAGLE received via Scaremail

Dennis,

I had the honor of meeting "Uncle Forry" at the first MONSTER BASH and I can't begin to tell you how thrilled I was to meet the man who had so much to do with my life long love/hobby. It was the first year I was to attend a "monster convention." Postage stamps, celebrities, magazines, toys, etc. It was GREAT and also a tradition I have maintained every year in one way or another. BUT, by far the person I looked forward to most was seeing and speaking with Uncle Forry! He was and will remain Uncle Forry to me as he had so much to do with my growth as a "monster kid!" RIP

BILL PETKO

I first met 4e thru the pages of FM #22...here was someone else that had the same enthusiasm for those great scary monsters and sci-fi dreams. I became an avid collector: mugs, posters, models, et al. I remember writing to Forry and was elated to receive a thank-u postcard, which I still have. I have had the pleasure of meeting 4e several times at various cons, and was able to give him a foto of himself with his wife and mother that I had taken at a previous con.

My last contact with him was at the FM con in LA in 1995. I have a foto of myself from that con with him. He was always gracious and enthusiastic. I also sent a short note to him when he was so ill just to let him know how much I cared. I believe it got to him well in advance of his untimely passing.

"Uncle Forry" meant a lot to many of us "monster kids" and I can only say there will never be another quite like him...we'll miss him, but his legacy will live on...a fond farewell to everyone's favorite "Uncle."

BOB MORIN

FORRY SHALL NOT DIE!

—(Continued on page 88)

OUR FJA Tributes

by Mark & Marie Sielski

BLOODLINES

I should start off by making it clear that I am not your typical FM Fatale. I didn't grow up building Aurora Monster Kits, racing to the newsstand looking for the latest issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**, ordering from the Captain Company—Monster Jigsaw Puzzles, Castle 8mm films, Cousin Eerie pajamas, or watching Saturday Night **CREATURE FEATURES** on Metromedia New York, Channel 5 (Those were my husband's **MONSTER MEMORIES!**)

However, during the 1970s, I did relish **STAR WARS** (which just hlew the lid off of Sci-Fi), and nearly equally enjoyed **STAR TREK**, **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND**, **SUPERMAN**, and **INDIANA JONES** of the early 1980s. It wasn't until years later that I learned that these aforementioned flicks were often scorned as FM covers by a group of devoted zealots. As one might begin to speculate, I am an FM-In-Law, marrying into the world of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**—which I would later learn to know was full of puns, plays on words, and termed Forry's Folly—through my husband, life and afterlife partner—Mark.

Mark kept **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** all to himself at the beginning—perhaps he thought it too weird for me to know about? It wasn't until perhaps the 7th or 8th date, sometime in May 1983 that I began to learn about Mark's other world—that there truly was a *Monster World*, and it was much bigger than a 10 issue run in the mid 1960s—a world full of dedication and passion, with many, many fans just like Mark. Going back to that 7th or 8th date, at a Chinese Restaurant, was when Mark broke the news, that **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**—which till that point I had never heard of—was gone. So depressed he was...and in showing some sympathy, I had opened a door—that led me right to the Ackemonster himself! As it turned out, Mark was a frequent pen pal letter writer with Forry, and when he had a few dollars, spent precious times talking long distance with his Uncle Forry. When FJA's **MONSTERLAND** emerged soon after FM's demise, Mark jumped at the chance to write for Forry and his new publication furthering a bond developed during many years of reading FM.

These bonds led to memorable future occasions. Stand out memories—after many years—have to be—the 1993 Rebirth of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** Convention in Arlington, Virginia, during which we, and our 2 year daughter,

got to spend some time with Forry, Gloria Stuart (**THE OLD DARK HOUSE**, **TITANIC**) and Sara Karloff (whose Father's portrait as Frankenstein, painted by Basil Gogos, is proudly on display at our home) and—Forry's 70th Birthday Party at the Hollywood Biltmore Hotel—where we had the pleasure of hearing and seeing Ray Bradbury. These events were loads of fun, and I was really quite surprised on how mainstream and weirdstream they were at the same time.

Over the years, after meeting so many FM fans, what impresses is the respect for the magazine and its creators. Forry's stamp on the genre of horror and sci-fi is obvious. FM turned out to be Forry's School of Imagination—where mainly young hoys of common interests—the Monsterkids—learned to find out they were not alone. Forry's communiqués in Fang Mail, and elsewhere throughout FM were the precursors to the Internet and the Information Highway, and



Mark and Marie Sielski with Forry in 1988 while on their Scarymoon.

more importantly made a large, distant and angry world (which in real life was horrified by testing of Hydrogen and Atom Bombs in the 1950s, raging war in Vietnam, political and racial assassinations during the 1960s, oil embargoes, threats of Presidential impeachment, and economic turbulences of the 1970s) seem safe, innocent, and closer together.

Forry was truly a person of special devotion and he impacted so many young individuals in a positive way. His messages of don't drink, don't dope, and don't smoke were groundbreaking considering their era. Being a FM-In-Law, I've had the opportunity to observe FM fans—(mainly) young men in the 1980s, then as men in the 1990s, and then as middle aged men during the decade of the 2000s, and in the not too distant future (2010s-2020s), as old men. Remarkably, when huddled together, at their conventions, I can see they feel like they were

12 again—just like Jim Warren wanted it, and Forry bumbly obliged to. Ponce DeLeon may not have found the Fountain of Youth, but Forry Ackerman did—and his generations of Monsterkids, have truly found their secret of youthful life, and hopefully, they'll continue to make the best of this special gift in the decades to come.

One last parting remembrance—I do have to admit, that part of my Honeymoon was spent at the Ackermansion visiting Forry back in 1988. So, I may only be an in-law and not be a "blood relative," but I doubt many of FM's original Monsterkid female readers can lay claim to that!!!

ALTERNATE DIMENSIONS (A.D.)

Ouring my flight to Forry's latest "Ackermuseum," I had a chance to reflect and think about what we might talk about. It wasn't everyday I got permission to leave...what I'll call "The Big House," so for those special moments it was most important that they be every bit as memorable as other visits to FJA's special place, where youth never grows old, and memories last more than a lifetime. In what may have been a THOUSAND LUSTRUMS of time, I harkened back to my 1985 travels to visit Forry—one full week—visiting the Ackermansion!

Thinking about the trip—what amazed me most—was how Forry opened his home and life's collection for me to peruse thru, room by room, bookcase by bookcase, and artifact by artifact. The 1985 trip was full of bridled optimism for fans of the collection and Forry, as he was close to inking an agreement with either the Queen Mary, or the City of Los Angeles to take custody of his belongings, thereby assuring that they would not be scattered to the ends of the earth. Sadly of course, this was not how history played out. During my days at the Ackermansion, I oogled around the video crews working on some Ackermuseum production. At nights, I had the pleasure not only to dine with Forry but his equally hospitable wife, Wendyne. Forry's friends would come in and out, and there always seemed to be someone there attached to the Hollywood industry of some capacity, at least during my impressionable week. And how can I forget, those lunches at the Ponderosa, or was it a Sizzler, so much time has since passed, but what a great salad bar, that much, is not forgotten!

Forry and FM were also intertwined with my childhood and adult memories that include family, and friends such as Steve



A VERY HONEY SCARYMOON, 1988. Mark Sielski at the gateway of the Ackermansion.



Forry has Mark Sielski under his spell during a 1985 week long visit to the Ackermansion.

Dolnick and John Ballentine. I still can never forget the Boris Karloff Memorial Issue, **FAMOUS MONSTERS** #56, which was my first FM ever. What a way to get caught by the phenomenon that in the end outlasted just about any other fad, for any generation of American youth. A neighborhood friend got the FM train rolling with a busbel of distributor FM returns

which were picked up from a Farmer's Market on Route 9 heading towards the Jersey Shore. After fascinating through the Captain Company advertisements, I persuaded my Aunt Josie to gift me the 70 cents needed to buy FM #56, which at that time, was already a back issue. Coincidentally some 3 decades later, she also provided for my Basil Gogos commission to revisit his groundbreaking FM #56 portrait. Months or maybe only weeks later after getting #56 in 1970 and battling what was some severe flu, mumps, measles, or maybe chickenpox, FM #68 showed up—my Mom went out and got it anticipating that FM would revive my faltering condition. Success! Thanks Mom.

Not only did Forry and FM promote "No Smoking," FM may also have inadvertently kept my father from having those one or more additional cartons of cigarettes that may have led to inoperable lung cancer. Years later, my father did battle with cancer, not once, but twice, beating it both times. As Forry and FM rolled out its production to 10 times a year beginning with issue #80, Dad was called upon to pick up the latest issue at a Market Street newsstand. Without a doubt, these FMs cut into his cigarette budget as I relentlessly hounded him day after day to bring home FM! Money was tight, but those FMs kept coming home month after month. Did FM really help—perhaps just maybe—Forry's anti-smoking campaign—and the richness of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**—was too irresistible. It is possible that not having the money to smoke those extra cigarettes made the difference. Cancer, after all, always had elusive causes and triggers.

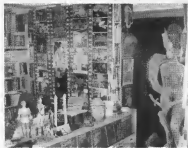
Upon arriving at Forry's latest residence, as things often went in earthly life, especially when in the



1985 visit—Mark Sielski now has Forry's Dracula ring!



Forry making monster magic in 1985.



presence
of a
childhood

icon—I found myself speechless when greeted by the Grand Old Man of Sci-Fi. In his little corner of Visaria, the Universal Monster movies still play 24-7; the characters of Erik, Quassimodo, Dracula, the Undying Monster, Imhotep, and Larry Talbot walk freely—in what is truly—a famous monsters paradise. At the end of Forry's journey, the streets aren't lined with gold; they're lined with pristine FM's—that never grow old, never wrinkle, nor soil, nor stain. They can be read now millions of times by millions of fans without fear of wear or tear. The newest Ackermansion is still filled with fans taking

turns to pose with the Robotrix Maria, but now they can really hold the Willis O'Brien Stegosaurus model without fear as one of the cinema's greatest artifacts has become unbreakable in the greatest and most everlasting monster convention of all! In what seemed to be a scene played a thousand times before, I cherubically approached Forry and asked for his autograph, holding in my hands the **SCARY MONSTERS** Forry Ackerman Tribute issue, #70 (A.D.). How ironic on this visit to Forry's, where myself and the other FM fans now have an eternity, I found myself at a loss of words. Forry glanced down at my very scary, monster magazine, and with a smile that went from ear to ear, acknowledged that **SCARY MONSTERS** #70 (A.D.) was his second favorite monster magazine issue, 2nd



only to the **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND #56**, his personal tribute to King Boris. As Forry perused the issue looking for a suitable location to place his personalized autograph to me, I did find myself the courage to speak and commented on Terry Beatty's stinging great portrait of Forry in Ackermmonster makeup, with furred but still piercing eyes, and the candelabra, burning softly in the background, and Terry's great use of reds, yellow, greens in what was truly an amazing piece of work. I read below of the **SCARY MONSTERS** masthead, and off to the left:

"2 IN 1 ISSUE!, ALL ABOUT FORRY ACKERMAN HIS LIFE IN PICTURES, COMMENTS ON HIS DEATH BY JOHN LANDIS JOE DANTE BOBBI BRESEE DENNIS DRUKTENIS PETER JACKSON RAY BRADBURY PLUS "THE ACKERMONSTER" COMPLETE WITH RARE PICTURES!!"

Yes, Forry was pleased with the Alternate Dimension edition of **SCARY MONSTERS #70**. As the trumpets trumpeted that special day, our time as Forry's monster fans was up, and we gathered ourselves for the trip back to "The Big House" on ANGEL'S WINGS. I looked to see what special message Forry left me and it was none other than a nearly identical autograph obtained during my special 1985 weeklong visit with a couple of (e)ternally and heavenly like exceptions that read...

*Welcome, Monster Fan Mark,
To The Ackermuseum
In Heaven(e)-Like Karloffornia
Forry Ackerman*



SCARY 70TH TRIBUTE ISSUE FROM THE BLACKY LAGOON! 079 SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE A Real Monster Magazine!

Forry Ackerman: *I Wish I'd never met Him*

by John Skerchuck

I really disgusted me when I read the news. Word had barely gone out that Forry Ackerman, our forefather in the monster world, was taken by Prince Sirkki when the posts began. Everyone who thought he was someone was posting the news about Forry and adding all of that tedious information of "what Forry meant to me" or "how Forry affected my life."

Now don't get me wrong. It's all right to grieve, but these posts were not grieving. These posts were from people who were stepping on Forry's dead body trying to get everyone's attention by saying, "Hey, look at me I am somebody important."

Forry Ackerman is the reason we are all here. No, I don't mean in these tributes but in a larger sense that we are buying and reading monster magazines and books, watching monster movies, and collecting monster memorabilia, and we're proud of it.

Most of us have shared a similar background. We had a love of monsters but we kept that love hidden because our friends or family might tease or ridicule us. We read FAMOUS MONSTERS and envied Forry for being so open about his love for the genre while wishing we could be so brave. And when monster fandom gradually came to be accepted what did we do?

How many of you wrote and thanked Forry then? How many of you spent the time and effort to tell Forry what a great man he was then?

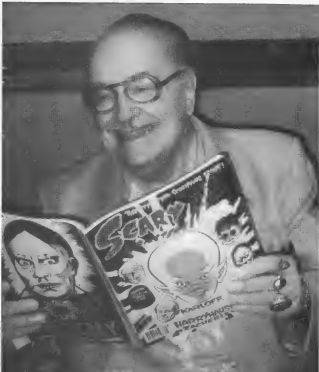
It made me sick to hear of the cries to send Forry a letter because he was dying. How was that going to help? Did you think he'd be lying in bed waiting to die while away the time reading your letters?

And what would you say? Sorry you're dying! Hey now that you're dying what are you gonna do with that old monster prop? Will you send me a signed pictures saying this is your last autograph?

Forry lived to be 92. When most of Forry's generation were dead between the ages of 68 and 72 Forry lived to be 92. We had an extra twenty years with this man, and how many of you took the time to thank him?

For years there was talk of building a museum to house Forry's huge collection. Many people thought that was a good idea. When word came that the only place to show interest was Germany, many people became outraged, yet no one did a damn thing about it.

In 1993, at the FAMOUS MONSTERS CONVENTION, the convention that I believed launched the current monster boom, Ray Bradbury told the fans who attended that if they each



Forrest J. Ackerman had just returned from New York where he received a lifetime achievement award known as the STOKER AWARD for his contribution to horror and decided to stop in at the FANEX convention last summer. "Before I move on to other things—down, you nasty things—I must catch up on my SCARY MONSTERS." (Photo and caption by John Skerchuck)

donated one dollar then they would be able to raise enough money to build a museum and house Forry's collection for everyone to see. Fans thought this was a wonderful idea. Everyone said they'd like to help. The amount raised at the convention was a whopping two hundred bucks!

Forry's kind heart and good nature made him prey to the unscrupulous. Don't get me wrong. Forry wasn't stupid. He had been around a long time. He was a literary agent and he had been involved in numerous business dealings. He knew how the world worked. He knew there were sharks everywhere, yet he wanted to believe in the goodness that lies within each of us. He was trusting to a fault, and I don't think there is another person out there who is that way.

Forry liked to surround himself with friends of similar tastes and interests. Time and time again he was let down. Yet he never let that get him down. He always had that smile. He

delighted in taking time for a joke or better yet, a pun.

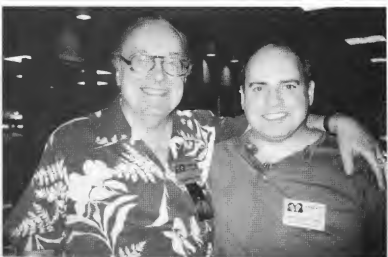
After Forry's stroke he had to move to smaller, more manageable quarters. The bulk of the Ackermansion had to be sold. It was discovered that a dear friend had betrayed Forry regarding some of his monster memorabilia, but Forry forgave that person and maintained their friendship. How many of us would have been able to do that?

I met Forry for the first time at a FANEX Convention in 1996. I was awe struck. He was the first celebrity I ever met and, had it not been for the insistence of my wife, I would never had my picture taken with him. He was everything I had imagined him to be when reading FAMOUS MONSTERS. He had that wide eyed naïveté of a kid looking at his stocking on Christmas morning. He was funny. He was witty. It is this image that will always stay with me.

In 1998, I finally got to tour the Ackermansion. Danny Roebuck and I made the trip and got there a little late. We arrived to see one of Forry's helpers stuffing some boxes into the trunk of a car. He looked guilty when we approached. He ushered us into the front door and not the back as was the custom. We were allowed free reign of the house as Forry seldom led the tour anymore.

I took loads of pictures. I ran through roll after roll of film. It will be a long time before I can get every image scanned into my computer. But with my photo log and a DVD made by Bill Edwards of his tour, I certainly have a lot to look at. You couldn't see it all in one trip. And it pains me that the collection could not have been saved as a whole. I own some gems from this mansion, but I would rather they could have been in an Ackermansion museum.

After the tour and question and answer period Dan and I took Forry to lunch. It was here we got to meet



John's first meeting with Forry at a FANEX convention.

the real Forry. Forry was often called one dimensional because he always seemed to say the same things. Well, after hearing the same questions day after day, year after year it was only natural.

"What got you started in collecting?"

"It was 1926 and I saw a copy of AMAZING STORIES magazine sitting on a shelf. It said, 'Take me home little boy. You will love me.'"

So in Forry's defense I could understand it, but being a long time fan, it became difficult to hear those questions and answers over and over again. Danny and I would often joke about it and make up our own versions of Forry's answers.

One magazine article that I read called Forry licentious. I have to agree. Forry could talk about any subject without regard to the company, and that included the occasional dirty story. When Danny and I had lunch with Forry he told us a dirty story that I probably wouldn't repeat to someone unless I knew him very well. It was funny, and we laughed, but it did surprise me. And it showed me how at ease Forry could be with company.



That fall Dan and I were back with Frank Dietz by our side. We roamed the halls and rooms again. Forry had a lot of stuff and we looked through quite a bit of it.

Shortly before Forry's stroke, Frank Dietz and I were back at the mansion one more time. That time we detected that there was something wrong. Some little kid was acting up and it was annoying to us (and we could tell Forry was a bit put out by it as well). The parents were oblivious to the fact that their child was being a real monster. It was at this time during the question and answer session that Forry was asked about Boris Karloff. Forry stated that Boris had died sometime in the mid 1970s. Frank and I

looked at each other puzzled. We couldn't figure out how Forry had made that error. At the time we wrote it off to the annoying kid, but now we think it may have been a sign of something more serious.

Upon leaving the Ackermansion guests were encouraged to sign the guest book and voluntarily leave a monetary donation. Dan, Frank, and I always left twenties. I was amazed at how many visitors left nothing at all.

Some Monster Kids told me that they were upset that Forry was an atheist. Forry believed that when he died his essence would be gone. He may have had reasons for this. He was devastated by the death of his grandmother, the one who had encouraged in him his love of science fiction and fantasy. The untimely death of his wife Wendyne hit him hard. Over the years there were numerous attempts to contact the Afterlife that never panned out or provided convincing proof. His involvement in the early days of Scientology helped to frustrate any belief he may still have had in an Afterlife. For those of you who are worried about Forry, don't be. I believe he will be (or has been by now) pleasantly surprised by what he finds.

If there wasn't a Forry Ackerman



would we have had to build one? Forry grew up with a somewhat privileged background. He wasn't rich but his family did have money. His creativity was encouraged by his grandmother and his parents indulged him and encouraged his interests. Forry never had to work digging a ditch or waiting tables. He was free to explore his interests, and the one that obsessed him was science fiction.

Many Monster Kids have debated how Forry earned a living. Yes, he was a literary agent for a while and he was a writer having sold some stories. He was able to travel and attended the first science fiction convention and many more besides. His obsession for collecting was well known. LIFE magazine even did a feature on him and his collection way back in 1951. He earned money as editor of FAMOUS MONSTERS while his wife earned money translating Perry Rhodan novels into English (over 100 of them). As his collection grew in size and value he occasionally sold items off that he no longer needed. Zacherley told me that his second meeting with Forry was in New York when he came to the city to auction off a number of his collectibles.

During the Forry vs. Forry lawsuit Forry could have easily sold something from his collection to pay the legal bills,



but he should not have had to and didn't. It was not right that he made to suffer. The lawsuit affected every Monster Kid and not just Forry. Had it gone the other way things may have been darker for us now.

When the medical bills came following his stroke, Forry did sell much of his collection to pay those bills and enable himself to live comfortably until his passing.

When Forry decided it was time to part with his Bela Lugosi Dracula cape, he could have sold it to any of a number of collectors for a good price. What he did astonished many and brought him ridicule from some (mostly the collectors who had the money to buy the cape outright). He had the cape cut into one inch squares and sold in that manner so that many of us could share in the treasure. That is sheer genius. It is kindness.

I love Forry and what he stood for, and I shall miss him. I wish, though, that I had never met him. You see, before I met Forry I shared the same image of him that most Monster Kids had—the jovial, knowledgeable editor of a great monster magazine who was quick-witted, and more than willing to entertain me. Meeting him I saw that he was so much more than that. He was a gentle kind soul, perhaps a bit too trusting and an easy mark for the unscrupulous souls who haunt our lives, but a true fan who kept the little boy in him alive right up to the end of his time. And he was so willing to share in his enjoyment that he let total strangers walk through his collection and even touch parts of it. Meeting Forry I saw a much better man than I was or ever could be or that any of us ever would be. I wish that I could tolerate as much as Forry did to unite us as a family of Monster Kids. I believe that meeting Forry included an inherent responsibility to continue in his footsteps, and that is a heavy burden.

Some years ago I, like others, began to honor Forry by wearing Hawaiian shirts at monster shows. The idea caught on for a while. Of course for those who didn't know the reason we, the Hawaiian 'shirt wearers who were CHILLER THEATRE regulars, were nicknamed the Hawaiian Shirt Mafia. It's funny, but it's not quite correct. We wear the shirts to honor Forry plain and simple. You won't see me at a monster show without one. I encourage you all to wear one in Forry's memory.

Finally I must say God bless Joe Moe. Joe stood by Forry for years. Never once did he try to steal from Forry as so many others had. He was never really interested in the collection but



A nice vintage photo of Forry with the Dracula ring and cape.



Joe Moe standing by Forry one last time.

was more concerned for Forry's health. I know it's not easy taking care of a senior citizen, but Joe did it without asking anything in return. He was certainly a true friend to Forry and one that all of us Monster Kids should admire. I believe that it was Joe's care that kept Forry with us for so long.



GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES: The Triple Role of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** *in One Fan's Life* (A TRIBUTE TO FJA)

by Michael Bogue

They say good things come in threes: the three wise men, the three musketeers—and the three roles **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** played in the life of one wide-eyed monster fanatic (me). During my school years of the 1960's and early 1970's, FM served as a friend, a teacher, and a mentor.

FM AS FRIEND

"Quiet!" my older brother Frank whispered as he held his index finger up to his lips. He then pulled out a magazine from under his bedroon mattress and held it up for me to see. The magazine was called **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**, the evocative color cover featured what appeared to my eight-year-old eyes to be some kind of werewolf (actually Bela Lugosi in **ISLAND OF LOST SOULS**), and the inside pages featured monstrous delights beyond my wildest expectations.

The issue was #28—but as my brother made clear, he and I were to keep this fabulous find a secret. Mom didn't like my brother or me dallying with movie monsters, though she had let us watch several science fiction movies on TV. But a magazine about such fare was no doubt forbidden.

Of course, it had to happen—one day Mom found out we had FM #28. AUGGHHHH! The gig was up!

I held my breath, but Mom didn't shred the magazine, toss it in the garbage, or tell us our brains were going to rot into mush if we read this trash—instead, she let us go ahead and keep the FM. No doubt Dad more than slightly influenced Mom's decision. After all, Dad was always fine with my fascination for dinosaurs and aliens and monsters—one time he saw me watching **FIRE MAIDENS FROM OUTER SPACE** on TV when the monster was on the screen. Dad smiled, winked, and said, "Yeah, that's right up your alley, Mike." I grinned back—a small but priceless moment from my youth.

And thus began my decade-long friendship with FM, for soon more FM's came into my possession—#31 (Karloff **MUMMY** cover), #32 (**KONG** monster-model cover), #33 (Chaney **HUNCHBACK** cover), etc. After all, what Monster Kid could resist those wonderful color covers of Dracula or Kong or scores of other classic creatures that screamed out at you from the magazine newsstand? I still recall how great it was to trot down to the South Lawn Plaza Drugstore on a sunny Saturday to see if the new FM had arrived—and my thrill upon finding it when it was there! Yes, I occasionally bought a few other monsterzines, particularly **CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN**, but at this time FM was a friend, CoF merely acquaintance.

Like any good friend, FM turned out to be a wonderful companion. I well recall the hours I spent poring over those great photos of Gothic horrors and space aliens and giant

monsters (no VCR's or DVD players then, so movie stills had to suffice—and man, were they fun to pore over!). Each time a new FM would hit the magazine racks at the South Lawn Plaza Drugstore, it was like meeting my old friend all over again.

FM never berated me, never mocked me, never chastised me. It provided comfort after I'd had bad days, bad months, or bad years. In some ways among my peers at school, I felt as much an outcast as did the Frankenstein Monster, yet FM seemed to understand that. Looking back, FM seemed to speak to the formative aches and pains pushing my mind and body into new geographic configurations—and even soothed the resultant angst.

For example, in 1967, my parents moved across town,



"...the evocative color cover featured what appeared to my eight-year-old eyes to be some kind of werewolf, and the inside pages featured monstrous delights beyond my wildest expectations."

meaning I had to go to a new grade school for my sixth grade year. I was withdrawn and shy, and it was hard making new friends in an alien place; in fact, most of my new peers (whose parents made much more money than mine) mercilessly ridiculed me, and I guess I unknowingly gave them plenty of preteen ammunition.

For example, I was, to put it mildly, athletically challenged, so I always got chosen last, and the team that wound up with me would always shake their heads and lament, "Oh, no, we got *Bogue*." Then the P.E. hour would ensue and the various jeers and catcalls and derisive laughter made the hour drag out into what seemed like a lifetime, but one thing always got me through it—I knew it would eventually end, and I knew at home I could retreat into Marvel Comics and Aurora models and, of course, monster magazines.

During this tumultuous school year of 1967-1968, one Saturday evening in spring when I was feeling particularly down, I found—to my joy—a copy of FM #49 at Gholston Drugstore. A wide grin on my face, I hurriedly thumbed through the pages. The photos looked ABSOLUTELY GREAT! Especially the three page photo story on MOTHRA! (I was an avid Japanese monster fan.)

Mom let me buy the mag (thanks, Mom!), and when we got home, I remember sprawling out on my bed and slowly looking through FM #49's pages over and over, with especial concentration on the MOTHRA photo story (I hadn't see MOTHRA at this time, but those wonderful photos were the next best thing—thanks, Forry!). That night, FM lifted my burdens, transporting to that wonderful world of Monster Mania where putdowns and posturing need not apply.

At the tail end of my prime FM years, the magazine was again to come to my rescue. In the summer of 1972, my family moved from the relatively large town of Amarillo, Texas to the tiny village of Ozark, Arkansas, a sparsely populated hamlet rife with trees, hills, and ties. This new rural environment was definitely a case of classic culture shock—I felt as out of place in Ozark as a Donnie Osmond fan would have felt at a Black Sabbath concert. My older brother didn't help things—he spun tales of the dreaded "inbred hill people." I didn't really believe his stories, but hey didn't exactly dispel my trepidation about this new environment.

That summer I was sixteen years old, and I hadn't purchased an FM in some time—after all, wasn't I beyond all that? But lo and behold, at the biggest grocery store in Ozark, FM #93's TALES FROM THE CRYPT skull beckoned at me from the magazine rack! I snatched up the issue, bought it, took it home, and eased back on the couch as I took in its "Special Fearbook Issue" contents that included looks at Ray



A full page photo of FM's editor Forrest J Ackerman could be found in FM #28. It was another first for FAMOUS MONSTERS as its editor played a man of the 21st Century in THE TIME TRAVELERS.

Harryhausen, King Kong, robots, man-eating plants, and other monstrous mayhem. Although I now live in Arkansas and was feeling ill at ease in its strange new world of pickups and plows and pickled pig's feet at the grocery store, FM #93 soothed my soul like an old friend.

(A caveat: Actually, I came to enjoy living in Arkansas—the mountainous countryside was lush and verdant, and there were plenty of trails to walk. Even better, I adapted pretty well in high school and made several friends, even joining the high school band [and thus never again having to go to P.E. class]. So it turned out my initial fretting over living in this ersatz "DELIVERANCEVILLE" proved unwarranted. But still, I am grateful for FM #93 being there for me when I had needed it during my early stages of Arkansas acclimatization.)

FM AS TEACHER



of course served as my Monsterology 101 instructor in all things related to sci-fi, fantasy, and horror movies. The magazine offered facts, facts, and more facts about not





just the major horror movie stars, but also the directors, make-up artists, and effects technicians.

It was in the pages of *FM* that I first learned of stop-motion animation and came to understand how Ray Harryhausen created all those wondrous creatures in monster movie faves of mine such as *IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA*, *TWENTY MILLION MILES TO EARTH*, and *THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD*. *FM* spoke of how *GODZILLA* and most other Japanese giant monsters were actually stunt men in costumes who rampaged through intricately wrought miniatures.

And of course *FM* provided a treasure trove of information about the horror greats—Karloff, Lugosi, Lorre, Chaney, Lee, and others. Sadly, Chaney was long-deceased before *FM*'s run, Lugosi had been hurried as well, and both Lorre and Karloff were to pass on during *FM*'s prime 1960's years.

FM editor Forrest J Ackerman understood the importance of keeping these great stars' legacy in the limelight—he did an excellent job, and now most Monster Kids can tell you things about Karloff et al that even some film historians might not know.

FM also extolled the achievements of expert makeup artist Jack Pierce, the man responsible for the iconic Frankenstein Monster makeup, among other feats of cinematic craftsmanship. Where would classic monsterdom have been without Pierce's talents?

In addition, *FM* featured many filmbooks, both of movies past and of movies more current. During my

"It was in the pages of *FM* that I first learned of stop-motion animation and came to understand how Ray Harryhausen created all those wondrous creatures..."

growing-up years, none of the local TV affiliates aired any of the classic Universal horror movies, so I relied on *FM* to tell me about those films' plots and to show me significant stills from each. One of my favorite *FM* filmbooks was for 1933's *ISLAND OF THE LOST SOULS*, which featured wonderful photos of Dr. Moreau's animals. (I was not to finally see this classic until the early 1990's!)

Yes, under *FJA*'s guidance, *FM* was a first-rate teacher. But in addition to teacher and friend, *FM* played a third important role in this fan's life.

FM AS MENTOR

Although I didn't know it at the time, *FM* was one of my primary mentors during my preteen and early teenage years. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that *FM* editor Forrest J Ackerman was one of my mentors—but then, *FM IS* Forry, and Forry *IS* (alas, was) *FM*; to some extent, the two are indistinguishable, as *FM*'s personality and purpose were completely shaped by its enthusiastic and knowledgeable editor.

For one thing, *FM* taught me that sometimes it's good to believe in something on faith. When I was a wee lad of eight in 1964, I saved up my allowance money and sent 60



"One of my favorite *FM* filmbooks was for 1933's *ISLAND OF THE LOST SOULS*, which featured wonderful photos of Dr. Moreau's animals." (©1964 by Warren Publishing Co.)

cents to Famous Monsters Back Issue Dept. for FM #27. I knew nothing about #27 except that great cover with the horned Cyclops monster, but that was more than reason enough for me to covet the issue.

I waited, hoping the magazine would soon appear in the mailbox. Everyday I got home from school, heart pounding in hopeful expectation, I asked Mom if I had gotten any mail. Everyday the answer was the same—"No."

After a few months, I pretty much gave up hope that FM #27 would ever arrive, and I felt a hollow emptiness in the pit of my stomach telling me I had been had. After all, I was just a kid, and it was easy for an adult to take advantage of one of us, wasn't it?

But after my faith in FM was near depletion, I finally received something in the mail from Famous Monsters Back Issue Dept.—not issue #27, but rather my refunded 60 cents with an apology that FM #27 had sold out. NEAT-O-MISQUITO! I had not misplaced my faith after all—FM was run by honest adults who *did* care about kids!

After this I saved up my allowance money again and sent off for FM's #26 and #29—and received them within a month! I was elated. FM could be trusted, which meant other adults could be trusted as well—they weren't all out to get us small fry!

In addition, FM taught me not to take things too seriously. Forry's frequent puns and usually cheery prose showed me that although he took horror and sci-fi seriously, he didn't take these genres too seriously, and neither should fans. Of course, some cryptics thought Forry's puns should have been a-bloo-lished, but in (Oliver)readability, Forry hoped that fans would ghouel along with the choke. Some did, some didn't, but who could forget some of those twisted plays on words?

Something else FM/Forry did was let me know it was okay for adults to like monsters. This was certainly news to me, as all the information I received from the surrounding culture assured me that "monster movies" were strictly kid stuff. Obviously, Forry didn't think so. I recall one "Fang Mail" letter in which the letter writer asked if FJA though an adult being interested in monsters was ridiculous. Forry's reply: "Frankly, no." After all, Forry was an adult himself, living proof that even a grown-up could like sci-fi, fantasy, and horror and still be a relatively "normal" Homo sapien.

Finally, FM/Forry taught me respect for my elders. YES! I know some FM readers have horror stories of one or both parents shredding FM's before their young, terrified eyes, and I know some of these readers subsequently harbored bitter feelings towards adults and "authority" in general. But Forry taught us to respect the greats of horror cinema, as well as assorted sci-fi folk, and they were all adults—grown-ups, almost all well beyond the age of thirty, if not deceased altogether. Forry respected them, and in turn he was indirectly guiding us to respect them as well. After all, not all adults (or all "authorities") are fascistic marionettes, and FJA modeled that truth for us.



HOW DOES THIS GRAB YOU?

HERE is the hot summer issue you've waited for all year! This Special Issue features an article on the greatest alien abduction of all time, and if KING KONG COMING BACK doesn't grab you, FU climb into a Godzilla suit and destroy Hong Kong! Sparring no expense, we've captured some MAN EATING PLANTS and brought them back to civilization to menace you; you'll pop your eyeballs like Peter Dinklage over the fantastic photos accompanying this feature. You won't react to fall asleep either over the headbanging pics of LON CHANEY SR. ... RAY HARRYHAUSEN ... BORIS KARLOFF ... TARZAN'S BEASTS ... and more.

Have a nice vacation... with FAMOUS MONSTERS for company.

Forrest J Ackerman

3

Forry and FM grabbed entire generations of kids just when they needed him the most like when Michael rediscovered FM with issue 93.
(© 1972 by Warren Publishing Co.)

Resolved: In my formative years, FM was one of my best friends, teachers, and mentors. It's a shame I have to use the past tense, but as some wise fear-lospber once said, all ghouel things must come to an end.

I began this article stating the maxim that good things come in three's. And during FM's twenty-five year run, one of the best things that came in three's for monster fans was the name of the magazine's editor: FORREST J ACKERMAN, aka Forry, FJA, 4E, etc. May he rest in peace.

Maybe FM was juvenile more often than not, but so what? It served as an excellent primer for young monster fans, and a welcome vacation resort for older genre enthusiasts. After all, with FM (and MONSTER WORLD), Forry scared enough to put out the very beast for his legions of proteen and young adolescent readers. There will never be another FM, or another Forry, but fortunately, Monster Kids do have one final good thing that comes in three's—memories, back issues, and each other.



Dear SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE,

—(Continued from page 75)

What can I say about Forrest J Ackerman that hasn't been already said by so many of the people that loved him and were influenced by him. And there are just too many anecdotes to relate, so I won't even try to go there. Let me just say that I knew Forry since 1962; and if it hadn't been for the hospitality and encouragement he showed me when I met him in the summer of that year, I might never have moved to California and pursued any of my various careers. One of the last things Forry ever said to me, just weeks before he died, was that I had been an important part of his life all these years. I don't recall anyone, at the end of their



Don Glut as Frankenstein with Forry at the World Science Fiction Convention in 1972.



Forry and Don in 1972 with two oil paintings that Don did of his version of the Monster from the NEW ADVENTURES OF FRANKENSTEIN. Don gave the 3-quarter view to Forry.

life, saying that to me before. I will always remember that statement...as I'll always remember Forry DON GLUT

It's hard to imagine the world without Forrest J Ackerman. I first met him 40 years ago, shortly after beginning my time as the Editor of the GRAVEYARD EXAMINER. Forry had come to New York for the Luna Con and we went together to a small gathering of fans in Brooklyn. Over the next 30 years I would see him at various conventions and he would always greet me warmly and ask how I was doing. At the 1993 FM Convention I joined him for a panel discussion where he used me as a focal point for a long and humorous story. Even as I write this, I can't believe he is no longer with us. His spirit, however, will be with all Monsterkids FOREVER. GREG BAZAZ



Hi Dennis,

First off, I want to tell you what a great magazine SCARY MONSTERS is. I have been buying your magazine since 2000, and I look forward to every issue.

I wanted to write to tell you about my phone conversation with Forrest J Ackerman last October of 2008. I found his phone number in an old magazine and just thought that I would take a chance to see if he would actually pick up the telephone. I called, and one of his assistants answered. I asked if Forrest J Ackerman was there. The assistant said that yes he was and that he was sitting right next to him that very second. He then asked me if I would like to speak with Forry. Caught a little off guard, I said, "Yes of course."

Forry got on the phone and I immediately knew that it was him. His voice was a little shaky from his failing health issues, but he had the kindest voice. I told him that I had been a fan of his, and FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND since I was a young boy. He thanked me. He then asked where I was calling from and I told him from San Francisco, California. Forry then told me that he had his first publication of one of his stories sold to the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE newspaper when he was very young. He also told me that he had lived in San Francisco for awhile.

I reluctantly asked him how he was feeling. Forry told me that a couple of days earlier he had lost his ability to taste anything. He immediately went into a list of food and drinks that he loved: Hamburgers, Steak, ice cream, and especially he said milkshakes. Forry sounded like he had a sweet tooth. Forry mentioned his age and that he had good days and bad days. He also told me his new address. I told him that I had missed the Ackermansons tours of his first mansion. Forry told me that I was welcome to come over on any Saturday to visit.

I told Forry that I really thought he was a great person and that I really admired him, and also just him picking up the phone to talk to me, an admiring fan, was a testament to what a really nice person he was. Most people would have told me to take a hike, not Forry. There are not many people like Forry in the world, inviting people into his home every weekend to share with people his passions and his life.

I sensed that Forry might be getting a little out of hreath and

tired, and after a 5 minute conversation I thanked him for talking to me and wished him all the best, and that I thought he was an incredible man. I also told him that so many people loved him the world over. I will never forget the kind voice that Forry had and the way that he spoke to me taking the time out of his life to talk to a fan during all of his health issues.

I said good-bye, and he said thanks for calling, and he hung up. I was stunned that I had just spoken to Forrest J Ackerman and I will never forget it.

God Bless You Forrest J Ackerman

JOHN EDWARD NEIL Marina, CA

Dennis—

It was with deep sadness that I heard of the death of Forry Ackerman; although I never had the privilege of meeting him, I still felt that he was "family" as he helped me grow up through the pages of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**. Some of my best **MONSTER MEMORIES** are connected with both, with my all time favorite being my appearance with a short poem in the pages of "The Graveyard Examiner" in the August 1982 issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** (#186). I was thrilled to be within

SHOCKRONYMN			
From Jerry Baker of New Carlisle, Ohio, the following:		To which the editor of the GE is obliged to add:	
Forrest Ackerman's Magazine	Movies Offering Non-stop	Other Fantasy	Folk, including Laborer
Of Unique Scientificity	Some-of-Wonder To Every Reader SF Issue!		Working. Look After Hellwome Deadlines

the pages of the true original monster magazine!

Although he is now gone, his influence upon the realm of monsterdom will never be diminished and I am certain the mention of his name will bring to mind many fond remembrances.

HERBERT JERRY BAKER Fairborn, OH

Hi Dennis

The first time I became aware of Forry was 1959 in my small town in Illinois. We were soon to leave on vacation, my Dad took me and my brother to Centralia Newsstand to let us get comics to keep us occupied in the car. While there I looked at the magazine rack and for the first time saw an issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**. I was quite interested since I'd been watching **SHOCK THEATER** for probably close to two years (totally terrified by ALL the Universal movies, after each movie I would crawl in bed with my Grandma for comfort and hopefully no nightmares, I was six years old). I started looking through that FM magazine, saw Forry's name; when I saw the movie photos I once again became frightened and quickly put the mag back on the shelf.

Several months later we moved to Phoenix, AZ. Near our new home was a place called Moore's Drug Store, they had an absolutely wonderful comic and magazine display and **FAMOUS MONSTERS** was there each issue. Since I was now a "big city" resident, I finally had the nerve to buy and read FM and from then on I bought every issue. I was always aware of Forry: his photos, his puns, his nicknames, his

articles, his requests, his history, his friends....

I loved every issue of FM and personally regarded Forry as a "distant" Uncle. Over the years I did want to visit Forry's mansion and meet him but it never happened. **FINALLY**, in 1998 I was able to attend **MONSTER BASH** and **FINALLY** I met and spoke with Uncle Forry. I was thrilled and delighted, my son-in-law took a photo of Forry and me and the smile on my face made me look about 12 years old. This is a memory I will cherish.

I heard about Forry's passing on Ron Adams website and became quite sad, I read all the comments, tributes, looked at all the photos and then began to shed a few tears.

Forry did create monster fandom and monster kids, he will never be forgotten.

RIP Uncle Forry, LOVE YOU

GARY BILLINGS

Forrest J Ackerman passed away Thursday Night (December 4, 2008) at 11:58PM of heart failure. There is no one, in my mind, that was more influential in creating a unified fan base for classic horror and "sci-fi" films. We will forever miss you Forrest J Ackerman. Here's one little slice of all the memories I have with Forry at the **MONSTER BASH** conferences: It was just myself and Forry in the car. I was driving him back to the Pittsburgh Airport. We were talking **FAMOUS MONSTERS** memories and movies, then we passed a "Wendy's Restaurant." You know, the burger chain. He suddenly stopped talking mid-sentence...looking from the restaurant back to me and said "Wenmmndy'sssss. I knew a Wendy once." He said it with a wistful sigh. Of course, Wendy was his wife who had passed away years before. It was a moment that hung in the air and I'll never forgotten. My heart went out to this lovely man.

RON ADAMS

Thank you for requesting tributes to Forry. Here is mine:

I'll miss Forry. One of the first magazines I'd ever purchased with my own money was **FAMOUS MONSTERS** #27, March 1964, the one with the Cyclops on the cover (Yes, I still have it—it's one of my prized possessions.).

I met Forry many times over the years, beginning in the mid 1970s at science-fiction conventions in Los Angeles. He was always the most joyous and polite of men (and that's saying a lot in fandom!), and when my daughter Vanessa was old enough to show up with me, he doted upon her like a loving grandfather. In the 1980s, I found out that he hosted Saturday tours of the Ackermansion and Vanessa and I made several pilgrimages to that sacred place.

Forry has been disparaged by many fans for somehow sullyng science fiction with his childlike enthusiasm and his coining of the term "sci-fi." I—and anyone who ever leapt with joy at the arrival of a copy of FM or **SPACEMAN**—declare otherwise. He did more to bring science-fiction to popularity than nearly anyone else. Without Forry, would there have been a Steven Spielberg or George Lucas? Early influence is everything in human development, and Forry caught us all as kids, at our most malleable.

His influence on generations will not be accurately gauged until decades from now. He has inspired innumerable people to enter the arts and sciences. He helped to build the future he wanted to see.

As an atheist, he did not think he would "go anywhere when he died. Many hope he's wrong, and that somewhere he and Wendy can hang out with Bela and Boris and all the citizens of the Imagination. *Mi amas vin Kviri*

VICTOR KOMAN



Ray Bradbury, Victor Koman and Forry Ackerman in Pasadena. 3/13/2003. (Photo by Vanessa Koman)

Dear Mr. Druktenis:

MY UNCLE FORRY

He was always there. My whole life. In one or the other of his "Ackermansions" in "Horrorwood, Karloffornia," surrounded by his magnificent collection of horror and "sci-fi" memorabilia. Dr. Acula, Mr. Monster, FJA. Standing there, with his hand outstretched, welcoming all and sundry into his museum homes, as we welcomed him into our hearts forever.

I only had the opportunity to meet him in person twice, once in the '60s and one in the '90s, but I often thought of him down through the years, especially during his recent legal travails and several health difficulties. Toward the end, I sent him a few letters and get-well cards, and even left some silly, affectionate messages on his (ever-available) answering machine, including one on his very last birthday.

I won't bore SCARY MONSTERS readers with too many details of my young life, but suffice it to say that I lived much of my youth in the fantasy worlds of Universal Monster Classics, Hammer and AIP Gothics, Sci-Fi "Big Bug" Movies, and especially DARK SHADOWS Collinwood. And there to guide me through those worlds was Forry Ackerman's incandescent FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND. And there was Uncle Forry himself, grinning his Cheshire Cat grin, fashioning his crazy, sometimes tongue-twisting puns, ever enthusiastic, knowledgeable, Puckish. Always.

And now he's gone. I'm not at all ashamed to say that I wept when I heard over the radio about his death. Of course, I know full well that Forrest J Ackerman, editor, writer, literary agent, raconteur, punster, Esperantist atheist, world traveler, and science fiction, fantasy and horror fan extraordinaire, belonged to every Monster Kid. But he was also my very own Uncle Forry, and I can only hope that, when Prince Sirkki at last called upon him (and with all respect to Dylan Thomas), he went "gentle into that Good Night."

Sincerely,

ALYSSON BILLS Portland, ME

I owe my love of monsters to 2 men, my dad and Uncle Forry.

When I was young and would be home from school sick in bed, my dad would bring me the latest copy of FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND magazine. My first issue was #66 THE OLD DARK HOUSE Filmbook issue. My second issue was #68. Having never seen a magazine devoted to horror movies I was hooked.

I had spent many Saturdays watching SHOCK THEATER on Channel 13, an Asterville station some 2 hours away.

It was through my Dad taking my brother and myself to the drive-in and the pages of FAMOUS MONSTERS that I received my education in Classic Horror.

Uncle Forry's puns made me laugh and I looked forward to every issue. Sadly we lost Uncle Forry last December, a great loss of a very talented and informative man.

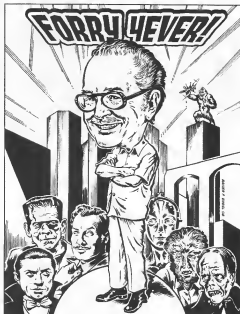
Uncle Forry gave myself many MONSTER MEMORIES. I am now a better person because he made my childhood most enjoyable.

Long live Uncle Forry!

JONATHAN JORDAN Bessemer City, NC

Dear Mr. Druktenis,

Terry Beatty wrote at the Universal Monster Board that you're looking for memories on the late, great Forry Ackerman. Well, I can't share an interesting story, there are sure better than mine, but I did the attached illustration for his 92nd birthday.



If you like my tribute to the famous Punster, feel free to use it for your great magazine (Did I already say I love it?). Please let me know what you think!

Thanks for your time and all the best from Germany,
RAINER ENGEL

More 4e on the next pages...

and MORE Scaremail Continued on page 112

SIRKI TAKES A PRINCE

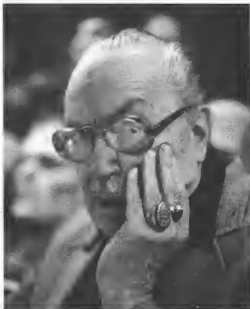
by Jeff Kurta

Just prior to Christmas of last year, a gentle giant of a man, departed this earthly orb, for a greater destination. This fellow, to always remain fondly remembered, had become a "member" of many of our families. Over the season, he had grown to become an intricate part of us...a welcome extension, if you will. Yes, he indeed was "an Uncle to the masses," in every sense of the word...and beyond. Now reunited with his beloved wife, and an entire cavalcade of life-long friends, most, past stars of the cinema of the fantastic. Names we all know, and for forever will personally revere. Forrest J Ackerman, "Uncle Forry," is now beaming down, from a higher plane. Smiling down upon the throngs that came to hold the fellow, so dear...to unselfish hearts.

Like hundreds of you, I, came to know of "F.J.A.," through the pages of the original **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** magazine, which quickly became our bible, to all things otherworldly and earthly, in regard to cinematic endeavors. I always looked forward to seeing that welcome visage, the man in specs, who always adorned a finger, with a most dazzling ornament, which I came to know later, was a forever treasure to behold, just as he was, and shalt forever be.

Almost from the very beginning (my very first-to-own issue of "FM" was number fifty-three...as perhaps many of you readily recall!), this Ackerman fellow, held high octane interest for me, always "livening up the party," with his on-going gaggles of puns, and frenzied foto-captions, that always tickled me. Monsters, were meant, afterall, to be fun! And fun, is what Forry provided for us, on an unending note. I looked forward to the monsters and madmen (and women!!!), in every installment of "FM," but I also needed "An Ackerman Fix," just as well! All, went hand-in-hand, making the bestest best filmonster mag, the complete package. Favorite highlights of his long tenure as "High Editor," on a strictly personal note, involved his many intriguing chats, with many of our beloved scare-theaters, of theatrical and home "scream" screens. Forry, was once "knighted," if you will, with the title of "The Poor Man's Vincent Price," which gave "The Real Thing," reason to nearly fall apart at the seams! What a cut-up, that Forry fellow, was. Forry, not only was a famous magazine editor, but a talented scribe, as well. An active film historian, his inner knowledge of the "filmdom of the fantastic," was most unfathomable!!! Forry, also rubbed elbows, with some of Hollywood's upscale celebs, on-screen! Yes, the fellow could also act...up!!! For evidence of this, dare play witness, to a few fear-frames of Al Adamson's **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN!!!** Do not say, "I did not warn you!!!" In all seriousness, Forry, was always a welcome sight, no matter what the scheme.

Above all else, Forry, was foremost, a man who held absolute adoration, for all his fans. He always opened up his "house," and his heart, to everyone. A very giving individual. Forry, regularly, gave of himself freely, making countless lasting friendships, along his many interesting and diversified travels. he was "a true bonafide friend." Along his journeys, the fellow, unfortunately, had to battle against, some downright fearsome foes, "the real monster of this world," never giving



into a skirmish. And through it all, Forry, never failed to forge ahead and beyond—to persevere. Forrest J Ackerman, was (and "IS"/), a true inspiration to me. It is no wonder that his loyal followers, add up to literal legions. I am outright proud, to call myself, "a true believer."

I hold ever-so-dear, my personally signed autographs. One, in particular, featuring Forry, in hand-etched form, as you guessed it... "The Ackemonster," is a gemstone to behold. It may indeed be, my top fave item, in my at-home Gigantic-Size Monster Museum!

On December fourth, Forrest J Ackerman, left this dimension, leaving behind "a living legacy." And at the tender age of ninety-two, he was and he had always been, for that matter, a total child at heart. To the end, "eyes filled with awesome wonder." The "pearly gates" above, have opened wide, to allow entering of a real "Prince" of a human being. A truly one-of-a-kind royal subject he was, and shalt remain. We bid you a fond adieu, Forry. You shalt forever and ever, be kept alive, in all our hearts. "Rest in Peace," Sweet Prince."

In leaving this planet, I almost thought I heard Forry announce: "And Beast Wishes To You All." It may have been but a whisper, yet, he made his departing presence known. I believe. Forrest J Ackerman, "May you ever reign supreme."

The Living End?

COME OUT AND PLAY WITH ME

by Jessie Lilley

When I met Forrest J Ackerman, back in 1990 or thereabouts, I was like a kid on Christmas morning. Stammering and making a total ass of myself I'm sure. The story of our meeting is unique. At the time I was publishing **SCARLET STREET** and working very closely with Richard Valley. His dad was quite ill at the time, and Richard was loathe to leave his side for any amount of time. Forry was to appear at the **HORRORTHON** Convention (now **CHILLER**) in New Jersey and Richard asked if I would go and get Mr. Ackerman's autograph for him on a treasured copy of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**. As there was not much else I could do to help him in his time of stress, I immediately agreed to do so.

Off I went to this gathering of horror fans to meet the man my partner so idolized, and glad to be doing it as I too was influenced by Forry at an early age. I got in line to meet the man, a copy of **SCARLET STREET** in one hand and Richard's FM in the other. My turn came to be ushered into the presence, and I was greeted by a wide grin, a raised eyebrow and a lascivious pat on the chair next to him, "Have a seat little girl. Is that a wedding ring? Well, never mind that for now." Right away this older gent whom I'd never met had me laughing and flirting like mad. Those first moments defined quite a large part of our relationship. As he browsed by offering of SS, he suggested that Richard's and my magazine looked pretty good, but it was lacking one major thing. "What's that Forry?" I asked. "Me!" he replied. And now you know how Forry came to appear in **SCARLET STREET**'s pages. It was a while before his musings appeared between our black, white and red covers, but they were worth waiting for.

Over the years, he and I have laughed, chatted, sung duets at conventions, danced (!) and most exciting of all for me—we worked together. When I eventually left "the Street," Forry asked me if this was a Warren/Ackerman sort of thing, because if it was, he'd follow me and leave SS. I told him it was personal between Richard Valley and myself and he should stick with SS 'cause it was a good hook and had a damned good editor. He laughed and said, "Well, okay Wonder Woman. If that's the way you want it." He and Richard continued to work together for all these years. Their friendship grew to the point where Richard and his partner Tom Amorosi were regular guests from the East Coast at Forry's last Ackermanston in the Hollywood Hills to the hangout in Lost Feliz where he passed his final hours.

Forry never forgot that I was the original publisher of **SCARLET STREET**, and was one of the few people who knew what the differences were that caused my split with Richard. After one of his LA birthday parties, I went back to Forry's bungalow and schoomzed a bit with Richard and Tom, on one of my attempts to dismiss old differences and be pleasant. This was mainly due to Tom's influence. That day, Forry beckoned me over after awhile to ask whether the hatchet had yet been buried... "in Mr. Valley's head?" I howled. He always knew just what button to push to crack me up. "No Forrest," gasped I, "nor will it be. Richard only has one head and I think he should keep it whole and where it is." or words to that effect. He patted my hand and said, "Now you know why I continue to refer to you as Wonder Woman. Say! What is your name, anyway?"

I also have the good fortune to have worked with Forry on **MONDO CULT**. He gave Brad Linaweaver and me a wonderful piece on **KING KONG** for issue 1 and of course, he's all over issue 2 as well, in photographs from Ed Plumb's and L.J. Dopp's **THE BONEYARD COLLECTION**.

Of all the things I loved about Forry though, my favorite was his joy and knowledge of music in general and old songs in particular. When I was a little girl, I used to go everywhere with my mother. We drove to the store or to her friends' homes or wherever, and every time we

got in the car, my mom would sing to me—and eventually with me. She sang all kinds of wonderful old songs including, **DAISY, THE BAGGAGE COACH AHEAD, HE SAT ON THE PIAZZA, PLAYMATE**... so many songs! And I learned them all. We'd sing duets and sometimes enter a friend's home in two-part harmony, laughing at the lyrics and thoroughly enjoying each other's company. Forry Ackerman knew all the songs I knew. We'd sing them together at conventions, after the doors closed and we were closing up shop—throwing lyrics at each other across the aisle and harmonizing—and laughing; always, always laughing, and occasionally a two-step toward the doors, on our way to dinner and the convention's night life. And then, the phrase I heard over and over again from Forry when we were attending the same convention, "Come out and play with me." There are not many people you can do something like that with, you know?

Forry and I drove to Kelly Fries' funeral together. We talked about everything under the sun, there and back again. He asked me to lunch at the House of Pies and I had to decline as I was expected elsewhere very quickly. He sighed and said, "Jessie, you have to promise me something. When you drive home from my funeral, stop and have lunch at the House of Pies for me, will you? If you don't I'll come back and haunt you."

When I heard he was so very ill this last time, I called and spoke to Terry Pace at length, and after hanging up I called and spoke with Forry. We spoke only briefly but it was, for me, the most memorable of our conversations. He was quite short of breath as one might imagine. I told him I loved him and he told me he loved me. To hear these whispered words—for the very first time—reduced me to tears. He said he had to go and thanked me for calling and I sat here, alone in Santa Cruz, wishing for the first time since moving up here that I was back in LA.

I knew he was in good hands. Earl Roessel was there and I know Joe Moe stopped by frequently. Between them, I've no doubt they did everything they could to keep our Uncle Forry comfortable and happy while he passed his last days at home. And with good friends like Ray Bradbury, Lydia van Vogt, Anne Robinson, Angus Scrimm and so many others there; and phone calls from Brad Linaweaver, Ray Harryhausen and others now far flung from Tinseltown, Forry passed knowing he was greatly loved.

Every time I'd talk to him whether in person or on the phone, I'd tell him the same thing when we were parting. "I love you Forrest. Take good care." In all these years, he's always said, "Bye-bye." or "You too, Wonder Woman." Never, ever did he tell me that he loved me. Hearing him say it that day, scared the hell out of me. I knew this truly was the last time we'd speak. I tried to get down to LA to visit, but my trip was delayed a week and as it turned out, it was a week too late. This then is one of my regrets. Forry was my friend. He was one of my teachers, a sometime confidante and a cherished playmate. I still love him dearly, and—I miss him.

Say, say, oh playmate
Come out and play with me
And bring you dollies three
Climb up my apple tree

Shout down my rain barrel
Slide down my cellar door
And we'll be jolly friends
Forever more more more more more

From the song *Oh Playmate*,
Come Out and Play With Me
Words and music by Saxie Dowell



FORRY *Before* FM

by Bill Warren

Most monster movie fans interested in Forrest J Ackerman are probably aware he had a life before the advent of **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** in the late 1950s. They vaguely know he was involved in science fiction fandom and was the agent for a few writers, notably A.E. van Vogt. They may know that he served in the army during World War II, editing an army base newspaper, and graduated with the rank of sergeant. (During the war, fans often called him Sgt. Ack-Ack.)

Monster fans apparently don't know that Forry was one of the most famous science fiction fans of his day, perhaps the most famous. And he got started early. He was born in 1916, and so was only 10 when he saw the science fiction magazine **AMAZING STORIES** on the newsstand. He was already drawn to fantastic subjects—he saw his first fantastic movie (**ONE GLORIOUS DAY**, now lost) in 1922. The magazine electrified him, and he was happy to relate the tale of his encounter with it until the end of his life: "It said 'pick me up little boy and take me home. You will love me!' And I did."

He was ready for science fiction, then just getting established as a genre of its own, largely due to the endeavors of editor Hugo Gernsback, who coined the term "sciencefiction." Forrest—almost always "Forry"—loved word play and puns; he became a devout student of Esperanto, the language created in an endeavor to give the world a single tongue. He was immediately attracted by "sciencefiction" and had the first letter in the first issue of **SCIENCE WONDER QUARTERLY** in 1929. The magazines with letters pages sometimes included the addresses of their correspondents. Forry wrote to one of these, and was overjoyed when he received a reply. He wrote (by hand) three letters to his new pen pal the same day.

There were a few science fiction fans before him and a lot who got started about the same time he did. He was bright and adept at writing—he learned to type very early and was always a very swift, remarkably error-free typist. He started a correspondence club called "The Boys' Sciencefiction Club" and soon had almost 130 correspondents around the world.

In the brief autobiography he wrote in the late 1950s for the fanzine **MIMOSA**, Forry said "the way the Boys

Sciencefiction Club operated was that you sent in a little snapshot of yourself. You also sent in either three issues, consecutive, of one of the magazines that had a serial in it, or a hardcover book, of which there weren't too many at the time.



Sgt. Ack-Ack.

In return, you got to keep either three magazines or a book for a month. Pretty soon, it got to where I was staggering five or six blocks to the mailbox, just to send off the books or magazines to these members." (The autobiography is really just Forry's Greatest Hits—his clearest, most interesting memories from his life. He seems to have written it in about 2000.)

He wrote vast numbers of letters to the science fiction magazines which appeared and disappeared quickly in the early 1930s. He began corresponding with science fiction writer Francis Flagg, and soon began sending him ideas which Flagg turned into short stories. Their first collaboration to sell appeared in the April, 1936 issue of **WONDER STORIES**—the magazine's final issue.

In the meantime, Forry had begun contributing to the first science fiction fanzines and was already pegging himself as a movie buff. In the first issue of what many regard as the very first fanzine, **THE TIME TRAVELER** (edited by Julius Schwartz and Mort Weisinger; ten years later they became the head editors of DC comics), Forry featured a list of all the sciencefiction movies he could think of; prominent, of course, was Fritz Lang's monumental **METROPOLIS**, Forry's favorite movie of all time. He also wrote for the fanzine edited by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who were soon to create



Superman. (The influence of science fiction fandom on comic books is a tale that should be told.)

He also was in on the founding (in 1935) of what became the **Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society**, or **LASFS**. It still meets every Thursday night. He flung himself into the **LASFS** with such energy and dedication that for the last part of the 1930s, he virtually *was* **LASFS**. Around this time, he met Ray Bradbury for the first time; Ray was an eager-beaver would-be writer and movie fan who sold newspapers on Los Angeles street corners. Also in the early 1930s, Ray Harryhausen, another Los Angeles kid, saw **KING KONG** in a revival screening. He was fascinated by the display of stills; when he asked where the theater had obtained them, he was sent to Forrest J Ackerman. Who in turn introduced the two Rays to each other; the three remained friends from then on.

Some people who've only heard part of the story become somehow convinced that all three were very active in **LASFS** (which somehow becomes called "The Rocket Society"), and that **LASFS** always met at Clifton's Cafeteria in downtown Los Angeles. Actually, the club met there only for a while; it roamed about L.A. from one meeting site to another. (Now it has its own building.) Bradbury was moderately active in the club for a while, but Harryhausen rarely attended. Still, the club and this three-way friendship remained prominent in Forry's life.

He became known, even notorious, for the letters he sent in large numbers to all the SF magazines. Forry was highly critical of this writer and that, and extremely defensive about the "purity" of science fiction. He didn't like it when a sciencefiction magazine published stories that were more fantasy than SF—and he wasted no time in sending off letters complaining about this "mistake." This resulted in a short-lived feud (in letters pages) with no less than H.P. Lovecraft, who eventually threw up his arms, figuratively speaking, and accepted Forry for the contentious but devoted science fiction fan he was.

During the late 1930s, he thought nothing of chasing smokers out of **LASFS** meetings, and was such a devout atheist, if that's the right term, that he grumbled when other people prayed. He did create some enemies; when he arrived in New York in 1939 for the first World Science Fiction Convention, as soon as he was introduced to then-active fan Cyril Kornbluth, Kornbluth punched Forry in the stomach. (C.M. Kornbluth later became a major science fiction writer.)

But in person Forry was quite different from the belligerent, confrontational letter writer; he was genial, relaxed and smiling. In time, his irksome letter-writing persona was replaced by his in-person self, to the degree that many who first met him after the advent of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** are amazed to learn of the feisty younger Forry.

Forry always had a comfortable ego. Once, when I was working for him, he showed me a letter he received that disturbed him. Among other charges, it accused him of being egotistical with the mind of a fifteen-year-old. I wasn't sure how to respond, and told him so. He said he thought he had the



mind of at least a sixteen-year old—and he wasn't joking. I asked about the "egotistical" charge. "How can I deny that?" he replied. "I have my initial in red letters two feet high on the front of my house."

On the other hand, when science fiction achievement awards—soon called the Hugos—were first presented, at the Philcon in 1953, the first one went to Forrest J Ackerman for Number One Fan Personality. Forry was discomfited—the award was for fanatic in the previous year, when his own activity had been primarily professional with just a little activity in/about fandom. So he announced that while he was deeply honored, he felt that it should go to British fan Ken Slater. Forry won the first Hugo ever—and gave it away. (But years later, he got it back from Slater.)

He initially hoped to be a science fiction writer like his idols, but realized ruefully he didn't have the kind of imagination that allowed him to plot novels (hence the collaborations with Francis Flagg). In the late 1930s, he began to think it might be possible to turn being a science fiction fan into a profession; I've been told by reliable sources that for a while, he actually charged a dime for his autograph to fans seeking it.

But he did have to do something to earn money. He initially lived in Los Angeles, and during the 1920s, his devoted maternal grandparents delighted in taking their eager grandson to movies. Once they saw five in a single day. But by the early 1930s, his family moved to San Francisco (the grandparents stayed behind), and Forry reluctantly went with his father (to whom he was never very close), his mother (he doted on her) and his younger brother Alden. It was there that he first developed his love of science fiction.

For reasons I have never known, in a few years, he moved back to Los Angeles to live with his grandparents. He went to the University of California in Berkeley for a year, then returned to Los Angeles. He had a variety of jobs, including movie projectionist; he worked for a while for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and stood guard over the Oscars the night **GONE WITH THE WIND** swept the awards. He was bright and a good proofreader, so he often worked in offices as a temporary secretary.

But of course all this time he remained a devout science fiction fan and highly active member of LASFS. He took over editorship of the club fanzine, **IMAGINATION** (better known as "Madge"), and made it popular all around the country. It was well known for its lively letters column, and for Forry's responses to these letters. So much so, in fact, that eventually he began publishing **VOICE OF THE IMAGINATION**, a fanzine consisting solely of letters and their responses. This became one of the most popular "zines in the U.S.; Forry continued on as editor for many years.

As noted, in person Forry was quiet, even shy. So his friends were stunned when he and his girlfriend Myrtle Douglas (a LASFS member whom Forry dubbed, in Esperanto, "Morrojo," the name by which she was best known in fandom) attended the 1939 Worldcon in futuristic costumes inspired by **THINGS TO COME**. The result was that costumes became a regular feature of science fiction conventions; almost all of them have costume contests. Not only did Forry attend the convention in this costume (which he had for many years), he even visited the New York World's Fair in the costume.

He kept up his fan activity (fanac) while serving in the army, and even became the chairman of the first post-WWII Worldcon, held in Los Angeles (known as Pacificcon). But he collapsed from stress on the first day of the convention; his duties were ably taken over by his friend Walter J. Dougherty. Forry was such a devoted, steady Worldcon member that a long-standing legend in science fiction fandom is that no matter where the Worldcon is held, the first person you'll see there was Forrest J Ackerman.

After the war, Forry tried a few other jobs, then set himself up as an agent for science fiction writers. Most agents handle all the fiction of their clients, but Forry largely handled only specific stories for his, though he was the sole agent for quite a few, including A.E. van Vogt. He handled some stories for Ray Bradbury, Charles Beaumont and many others.

He also wrote a great deal, not always for science fiction magazines. He adopted pseudonyms by the bushel—I doubt that Forry would have been able to name all those he used, but among the most frequent were Spencer Strong and Weaver Wright. Sometimes the pseudonyms weren't really intended to hide his identity—"J. Forester Eckman" is a little transparent.

He met and married Matilda Wahrmann in the late 1940s, and soon named her Wendayne, the name she used the rest of her



life. She and Forry were married (and divorced, and married again, but that's another story), and by 1953 had purchased their first home, which Forry (of course) dubbed the Ackermansion.

Which brings us close to the creation of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**. From that point on, most monster fans are pretty much aware of the trajectory of his life. But don't forget, don't overlook, the fact that he had a life before **FM**, that it was a lively and colorful life, centering entirely around his love of science fiction. Forry was beloved by fans who love monster movies, but he lived, and died, Science Fiction Fan No. 1—Mr. Science Fiction.

THE FREEDOM TO REMEMBER

by Brad Linaweaver

Forrest J Ackerman was the best friend science fiction ever had. The man who loved Frankenstein movies would appreciate the observation that he was more than the sum of his parts. He was an agent. He was an editor. He was a writer. He was an actor. He was a splendid raconteur. He was the supreme collector.

But more than any of that was the importance of his love affair with what he called Sci-Fi. Some of us throw up artificial barriers between science fiction, fantasy and horror. Forry knew better. We may wonder if that strange creature trampling us is an alien or a monster, but Mr. Ackerman would run the same picture in his seminal film magazines, **FAMOUS MONSTERS** and **SPACEMEN**. The same picture.

Is that giant robot on the horizon a tool, a friend or an enemy? It all depends on the point of view. As children we learned empathy and how to make distinctions from a number of unlikely sources. Perhaps FJA was the best.

Our kindly uncle was the rarest of aliens, a welcome teacher. He was the Walt Disney of science fiction! He took us on a time machine, borrowed from H.G. Wells, and showed us that the past still lived in his favorite city, the Gothic futurama of Fritz Lang's **METROPOLIS**. Forry invited us into the lair of Rotwang, the mad scientist's bouse; but here was an old house haunted not by ghosts but by dreams of the future.

The Ackermansion built his own magical castle on several occasions at different locations. The most famous was the mansion on Glendower with its Lovecraftian basement for the kids, Grislyland. Wherever he lived, he made it Hollyweird, Karloffifornia, surrounded by loved ones and loved objects. He departed the world at the age of 92 in his own Mad Lab.

His lifelong friend, Ray Bradbury, was in contact with him right to the end. Along with their third friend, Ray Harryhausen, these men made a permanent mark on the imagination of the world. They were members of LASFS, America's oldest science fiction club, before World War II. Robert A. Heinlein was a member back then. Those were golden days in Los Angeles.

Forry often said if he ever wrote an autobiography the title would be I

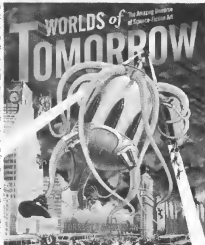


Brad Linaweaver and Forrest J Ackerman signing their book **WORLDS OF TOMORROW: THE AMAZING UNIVERSE OF SCIENCE FICTION ART** at the San Diego ComicCon, the **SKY CAPTAIN** booth. The book was cross promoted with the film. Photo 2004 by Lenny J. Provenzano. Arm by Jessie Lilley, editor of **MONDO CULT**.

NEVER MET JULES VERNE. Think about that. Whether writing a script for a Boris Karloff record album or befriending Bela Lugosi, he who was known as the poor man's Vincent Price always found time to blast off in a private rocket ship and attend The World Science Fiction Convention. He wore the first Worldcon costume (inspired by **THINGS TO COME**) and received the first fan Hugo. He was the premier science fiction fan, enjoying the highlights of the 20th Century on his journey.

How appropriate that he would be the literary agent of A.E. van Vogt for many of those decades—a grandmaster of science fiction who came up with so many memorable aliens that influenced generations of movie monsters.

An encyclopedia could be produced listing all those who received inspiration from Forry to pursue careers in the entertainment field. The famous, the not so famous, the infamous, the obscure. We all have our stories.



FORREST J ACKERMAN

THE BEAST FRIEND A SCIENCE FICTION FAN EVER HAD.

A PAID ADVERTISEMENT FROM THE FIENDS
AT WARREN PUBLISHING COMPANY



A cool Warren ad found on the back cover of the LUNACON 74 program book. (Courtesy of the Scare Collection)

SCARY 70TH TRIBUTE ISSUE FROM THE BLACKY LAGOON! 097 SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE A Real Monster Magazine!

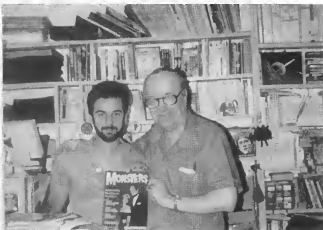
MONSTER MEMORIES of THE ACKERMANSION

by Paul Parla

When my wife Donna and I relocated to California in 1983, it was a special time for us...as collectors and having visited the late, great Forrest J Ackerman at the Ackermansion in 1977 and 1981, we were now on California turf to stay and our **MONSTER MEMORIES** of continuing to build our collection of sci-fi-horror posters and photos took a sizeable leap...during numerous visits between 1983 and 1998.

Forrest would often, by appointment, have collectors like myself over to the Ackermansion on Glendower and would allow me and others to look through the file drawers of still photos and choose desired photos for purchase. I would remember with some titles, Forrest would not sell a "special" particular shot unless he had an "extra" of the same in the file...similar to a Mark Ricci (MEMORY SHOP-NYC) type practice. I purchased many great 8 x 10 photos from Forrest through the years and also, a number of original movie posters and back issues of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** and **SPACEMEN**.

I remember upgrading all of my **SPACEMEN** issues to nearly mint condition with the quality issues Forrest still had to sell at the time...some early issues of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** as well including a truly mint #1 copy I purchased for \$125 from Forrest in



The Ackermansion in 1981 posing with Forry and my mint #1 purchased from the Ackerman files in 1977 for \$125.



An original **METROPOLIS** lobby card on display at The Ackermansion.

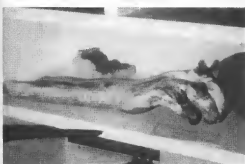
1977...a copy Forrest was reluctant to part with.

Many times, in the early days, it was like a dream being there...in the caverns of the Ackermansion looking at the incredible mass of sci-fi history Forrest collected through the years.

'Uncle Forry' was always so incredibly obliging. I remember



Forrest J Ackerman greets fans and visitors to The Ackermansion in 1981.



The arm from **THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD** on display at The Ackermansion in 1981.



The 7 **FACES OF DR. LAO** stare back at The Ackermansion in 1981.



1981 at the Ackermansion...The Ymir from **20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH**, the lighthouse from **BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS**, among other original props.



A Lost World on display.



At the Ackermansion...I approach Forry and ask..."Can I look through the file drawers of photos?" And the answer came, "Why of course." A laid back Forry in 1981.



him sitting in his chair one early morning and autographing...ever so slowly and neatly the first 25 issues of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** for me.

Forrest J Ackerman was a genuine inspiration to all who love classic Science Fiction, Horror and Fantasy. Here are some photos of 'hack in the day' at the **ACKERMANSION** with Forry.

In Memoriam—FORREST J ACKERMAN

by Jack Gourlay

He has gone to that great METROPOLIS in the sky. Mr. Forrest J Ackerman wore a number of titles in the fantasy film world—Mr. Science Fiction to name just one of them. He was truly an inspiration to a legion of followers, and we're just lucky we now have a periodical such as **SCARY MONSTERS** to continue on the entertaining tradition started by his "hrainchild" in 1958—**FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**.

I first saw this magazine in the early 1970's at a slumber party where one of the attendees read aloud to the group the entire filmbook of **GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN** from issue #85. The first one I bought on the newsstand was #89 with the infamous Zandor Vorkov of **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN** on the cover. That movie of course contained one of Forry's innumerable cameo appearances as one of the monster's victims, for which he was paid \$100. "The monster grahs hold of me, slams me down on the pavement and I'm lying there holding my hreath, turning purple and the director forgot to call "Cut"" he recalled. Perhaps we can more kindly recall him making brief, eye-winking turns in better fare such as **THE TIME TRAVELERS**, **QUEEN OF BLOOD** and **THE HOWLING**.

My initial in-person encounter with "Mr. Monster" occurred in the summer of 1978, during my first trek to Hollywood. We arrived at the renowned Glendower Avenue address and waited for him to return from lunch; finally that red Cadillac rounded the bend and that familiar smiling face looked at me and waved. A magical moment. We spent hours in his gem-packed basement and I singled out 20 stills from his duplicate file for purchase—all classic 1940's Universal Studios monster shots with several of Bela Lugosi being made-up by Jack Pierce as Ygor during **SON OF FRANKENSTEIN**. They were the first stills I ever bought and a bargain at \$48. Forry seemed concerned that I was spending that much money, asking "Do you have a job?" Of course—but I wished I had HIS! He also patiently examined my scrapbooks on Hollywood and Lon Chaney, Jr. and signed a few items.

A year later I returned and spent a few weeks in this glorious setting doing odd jobs for him and getting paid in monster memorabilia. A friend of mine kidded, "What are you gonna



(Photo Courtesy of Mark Sieski)

do—go to McDonalds and get a Big Mac in exchange for a still from **THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN**?" Of course not—I couldn't part with such a thing! I lunched with Forry a few times at one of his favorite haunts, The House of Pies, and one day while sitting in there referred to him as "King of the Punters," which he didn't deny. One of my favorites was his headline for the Carroll MARK OF THE VAMPIRE Borland Interview: **WHAT MAKES LUNA TICK?** Classic!

Two years later I interviewed him for a manuscript on Lon Chaney, Jr. and in 1988 after John Carradine passed away sent him a copy of my giant scrapbook on, as he called him, **THE THIN MONSTER**. He returned the favor with a free, signed copy of a valuable hardcover edition of Patsy Ruth Miller's book about her silent film career, highlighted by the 1923 **HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME**. I last saw Forry in the late 1990's at an Omaha revival of the original **KING KONG**, accompanied by two of his oldest and best friends: Ray Bradbury and Ray Harryhausen. I remember he was attired in a dark suit but the chosen



A portion of a page from Jack's scrapbook on Forry.

footware of tennis shoes gave me a smile.

These are just a few of my personal memories of "Uncle Forry" and I'm sure you will receive a flood of others, and deservedly so. My own mini "Jacker-museum" is a testament to Forry's influence. He was one of a kind.

FORRY AND ME

by Max Cheney

My memories of "Uncle Forry"—Forrest James Ackerman—are widely separated.

I spoke to him when I was young and he was middle-aged, and again when I was middle-aged and he was old.

And thought about him a lot in between like thousands of other FAMOUS MONSTERS fans.

Forry's puns and wordplay shaped me profoundly, spurring on a love of reading that eventually led to my becoming a high school English teacher—and I went on to teach the novel FRANKENSTEIN, and short stories by Forry's lifelong friend, Ray Bradbury.

The first time I looked at FM I was four years old; I became a steady reader at six. I read it until I was in high school.

When I was thirteen, I was a good pious Christian child. Though I voraciously devoured FM and all the Warren magazines, I remember calling Forry Ackerman—because something had offended me! An article appeared showing two visitors to a theme park—made up as Frankenstein's Monster and his Bride! Costume weddings had been performed previously at the theme park, and the article wrote in warm tones about it all. "What's this?" I thought. "That's a sacred institution being made light of!"

So what did I do? Did I write a nasty note to "Fang Mail"? Noooo. I got Forry's phone number and called him collect! (I made the secret call in secret, too, because my dad would've killed me otherwise!)

I remember complaining to 4E about how sacrilegious and in poor taste the wedding photo was! He took it all in good humor, and was friendly and patient with me. Yet, the memory embarrasses me to this day, because of my kvetching. Thank god I also had good things to say about the mag. It was very special to me growing up. (Thankfully, I mellowed in a few short years—at 16, I was president of my teen Sunday School class, and was in charge of taking the other teenage church members on an outing; I led them all to a drive-in screening of the sometimes-raunchy-but-always-funny film KENTUCKY FRIED MOVIE, which had Forry in a tiny part. Of course, we kept the trip secret from the adults!)

Getting to see monster movies was such a rare treat in those pre-cable, pre-video days, and Forry's FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND gave me images and narratives ("fearbooks") that allowed me to create in my mind's private theater my own "imagi-movies," as Forry described genre flickers. Later in adolescence, allowed to stay up to see late-night creature features, I discovered that FM had helped me imagine a world of gods and monsters that was sometimes more fearsome and thrilling than the movies whose photos and



Max with Forry in 1997. *Forry and Me!*

descriptions I had been inspired by. That gave me the confidence to draw monsters, and explore some drawing talent I didn't know I had.

Forry's tributes to the work of Chaney Sr., "King Karloff," Bela Lugosi, Chaney, Jr.; Peter Lorre and Vincent Price taught me to appreciate the craft of acting and the art that goes into making a film. And at a time when the counter-culture was scaring my parents, Forry's attitude taught me a respect for the past. (I'm sure my father would have preferred that it had taught me more respect for HIM at the time. I would have preferred to have a father with the same sense of wonder, and humor, as Forry.)

He was a man I wanted to be like. He was courteous, energetic, and dedicated to a profession that made others happy. No wonder he was everyone's "Uncle."

A dream come true finally happened in 1997: I met Forry. It was at the 20th Archon sci-fi convention in St. Louis. Boyhood friends Forry Ackerman, Ray Bradbury, and Ray Harryhausen were all there. And I met them all. I could have died then and been happy. Among the highlights for me were Forry showing me Bela Lugosi's ring, and his telling his famous anecdotes.

As if Fate said that Forry would keep appearing at important times in my life, he was a guest at the 2005 MONSTER BASH, which was my first, and it was the site where my fiancé Jane (now wife) and I chose to announce our engagement.

The first day there, we came to a table Forry was sitting, and chatted. Forry, as the result of a stroke, looked frail and had become hard of hearing. But he was even friendlier and jovial than I'd seen him be in '97! And he made us laugh. When I

told him that Jane and I were engaged, he shook his head regretfully and said, "Damn! I missed my chance!" Then, when I was beside him for Jane to take a picture of him and me, he shot off another quick quip as Forry was seated, I lowered down a bit next to him—so Jane had to kneel to take our picture. Forry said, "Just what I like to see—a beautiful woman kneeling before her man!" The old devil! We all chuckled; he was still the King of Puns and Low Humor (I called him "Your Badjesty"). I made Forry laugh when I told him that I hoped he lived to be at least 100, and that his death result from being shot by a jealous husband!

At the following year's **MONSTER BASH** (Forry's last, sadly), I had the privilege to sit with Forry on Sunday morning in the hotel restaurant, swapping old jokes with him, and singing Al Jolson songs together. Afterward, Forry enthusiastically and dramatically quoted large swatches of dialogue from classic horror films. (At that restaurant—which was horror-ble!—people had time to quote **ENTIRE FILM SCRIPTS** before an order would arrive.) It was one of the best times I ever had.

The laughs he gave me I had one last opportunity to repay.

A few days before Forry died, I e-mailed a list of 10 puns (not original, but ones I liked) to Joe Moe, Forry's friend and caretaker. He wrote back, "Hilarious! Can't wait to read em' to Ack!"

And he did. I had the surprise of my life when I read, less than 48 hours after "Ack"'s passing, this post at the Classic Horror Film Board by Forry's close friend of many, many years, Lee Harris, who saw Forry every day near the end:

"Here is what you've all been waiting for, 4e's last pun. This was not a pun BY him—fans sent him puns in his last weeks, and Joe read him the worst of them. (It works in the whole "anti" aesthetic, where the pun's merit is based on how awful it is.) What follows is the last pun 4e ever heard, and



Forry. Max and Basil Gogol paint an interesting picture at **MONSTER BASH**.

laughed hard at, just a few days ago:

"Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, walked barefoot most of the time, which produced an impressive set of calluses on his feet. He also ate very little, which made him rather frail and, with his odd diet, he suffered from bad breath.

"This made him a *super calloused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis!*"

This was one of the puns I sent! I was stunned! By sheer luck, had I been able to give the man who'd made my miserable childhood more delightful, whose wordplay got me interested in reading, his last good laugh (at a bad joke).

I had! I contacted Mr. Harris, who confirmed that this pun was not sent by anyone else.

I was so amazed and so moved. I **ACK**ually had tears in my eyes. What a privilege to make him laugh! (Well, he **MAXED FOR IT!**)

Forry shared the joke the next day with Verne Langdon, who later told me he was still amused by it.

Goodbye, Forrest J Ackerman. You may be gone, but you'll always be a part of my life, in my imagi-memories. Thanks.



Memories of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**

by Bob Statzer

1969.

Summer is slowly becoming a memory as the new school year picks up steam, but the anticipation of an upcoming birthday followed almost immediately by Halloween (and then Thanksgiving and Christmas) lessens the sting of lessons. A sunny Saturday morning finds me riding my red Columbia bicycle down the sleepy sidewalks of Main Street in a small Midwestern town to check out the latest comic books at Mousie's, our local drugstore/soda shop. The old wooden floorboards creak beneath my feet as I head straight to the magazine rack in the back of the store. But something "new" catches my eye this trip, something I don't recall having ever seen before. Glaring from the Halloween-orange cover of a magazine is Barnabas Collins, the vampire star of the daytime soap opera **DARK SHADOWS**. All thoughts of comic books are momentarily forgotten.

Half-hidden behind other titles, I slid the prize out, **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND?**

A magazine all about monsters? No way! Wait a minute; the cover says this issue #59. So why haven't I seen this before? Hmm, the cover also says it's 50 cents. A fella could buy a lot of comic books for that kind of dough. Better look this over and think about it. As I thumb through the pages I see some guy named Christopher Lee is starring in **DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE**. Well he doesn't look like Lugosi, but maybe he'll be OK. (It would be another four years before I would be blown away by my first look at "Dracu-Lee," in **HORROR OF DRACULA**.) And Peter Cushing will soon be haunting the screens in **FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED**. That looks pretty promising, especially when one photo showing Frankenstein drilling into a man's head has a caption telling us this is the only "boring" part of the movie. Gee, the rest of



"But something 'new' catches my eye this trip... Half-hidden behind other titles, I slid the prize out."



"That looks pretty promising, especially when one photo showing Frankenstein drilling into a man's head has a caption telling us this is the only 'boring' part of the movie."

it must be pretty intense! Oh, wait; that was a joke. Humor and horror? To my discriminating third grade mind, I'd hit pay dirt! I was sold, and so was that issue. Getting home, however, I soon found my parents didn't share my enthusiasm for this latest discovery. As a result, it would be three years later before that next issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** came across the threshold with #94 in the Fall of 1972. (Although **FOR MONSTERS ONLY** #10 did find its way home a few months earlier.)

The arrival of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** #94 officially kicked off my collection. (And its article "Dracula in Flames" revealed that Lee fellow was still sporting the fangs, this time in **SCARS OF DRACULA**.) While I somehow missed #95 (often only two or three copies of an issues showed up in our tiny town, so you had to get there early to make sure fellow fright film fans didn't beat you to it.), I was with FM up until the end of the original run with 190. Granted those last years and issues were a bit heavy on the sci-fi side, reflecting the impact **STAR WARS** made in the entertainment industry. While horror was still alive as the decade ended, its face was changing as the Seventies gave way to the Eighties. Dracula, Frankenstein and the Wolf Man were to be unsurpassed by such unstoppable serial killers named Michael, Jason and Freddie, and big budget (and low budget) fantasies and sci-fi fare would begin to replace monsters on the marquee. But the early Seventies still held hope for horror as vampires became popular with publishers and filmmakers, due in no small part to the publication of **IN SEARCH OF DRACULA**, which introduced Count Dracula's historical counterpart Prince Vlad the Impaler to the masses. For a while, at least, studios like

Hammer, Amicus and A.I.P. would continue to crank out Gothic horrors for walk-ins and drive-ins.

In the pages of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**, I discovered behind-the-scenes looks at favorite films, as well as learning about movies I'd never heard of...but certainly wanted to see! Even the ads in the back of the magazine were awe-inspiring. But oh how long a wait it was between sending in your order and having the package show up at the post office! One gem being offered in the pages of FM was Richard J. Anobile's **FRANKENSTEIN** frame blow-up book, which presented the 1931 Boris Karloff classic through hundreds of stills taken from the actual motion picture. In those pre-VCR days, these "Foto-Novels" were the only way for fans to study film in detail. Unless of course, you had your own private screening room...

In this age of instant access to movies online and on video, with cable and satellite offering over a hundred channels to choose from, it's hard to imagine a time where a film might only be available for viewing once, maybe twice, a year on TV. But there in the pages of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** were actual motion pictures being offered for sale, allowing you to watch clips of classic creature features on the family's home projector. And if you had a garage with white siding that could double as a giant movie screen, the backyard could become an instant outdoor cinema during the summer. As that thought ran through my mind, another one quickly came on the heels of it: If the home movie projector could be used to show monster movies, the home movie camera could be used to *make* monster movies! And make them we did! (For a more detailed look at my movie making misadventures, check out "I Was a Teenage Filmmaker" in **MONSTER MEMORIES** #9, the **2001 SCARY MONSTERS YEARBOOK**.)

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND not only inspired filmmaking, but writing and illustrating as well. In grade school I began cranking out my own horror stories and tried creating my own comics. By junior high I was writing film reviews for the school newspaper, and high school found me on the yearbook staff. And **FAMOUS MONSTERS** also marked the first time I appeared in print. On December 17, 1976, producer Dino De Laurentiis' controversial remake of **KING KONG** opened. Like many fans of the original, I was standing in line opening weekend to see if it lived up to the hype. And, like many FM readers, I sent my response to the film to the "Fang Mail" letters column of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**. When **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** #134 hit the streets, a cover blurb read "King Kong Clashes" caught my eye. As I opened this new issue, little did I realize I'd find my letter about the new **KONG** incorporated into an article about reader reaction to the remake. (Although, in retrospect, I might



"As I thumb through the pages I see some guy named Christopher Lee is starring in DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE. Well he doesn't look like Lugosi, but maybe he'll be OK."

have been a little too enthusiastic about the film's merits...but it's still fun, in a Toho sort of way.)

1979 saw the Seventies and my high school career coming to an end. That year's production of **DRACULA**, starring Frank Langella, was almost the last gasp for Gothic horror. The previous year's **HALLOWEEN**, was an imaginative but low budget thriller that became the biggest moneymaking independent production up to that time, was a watershed in the history of horror. While not the first film of its kind, it had been better written and executed than most. The craftsmanship onscreen, couple with profits at the box office, inspired numerous imitations and sequels. This evolution in horror, as well as the success of such fire as **STAR WARS**, **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS**, **SUPERMAN** and the big screen incarnation of **STAR TREK**, found fewer classic creature features going into production. Studios were turning to the future for shudders, with films like Ridley Scott's **ALIEN** combining monsters with audience interest in outer space.

FM's initial demise was not due to just "reel" world issues, but *real* world influences as well. **FAMOUS MONSTERS** publisher James Warren began suffering health problems. Without him at the helm to oversee the daily operations of

Warren Publishing, editor Forrest J Ackerman (affectionately known as "Forry" to fans and friends) found it increasingly frustrating to work on the magazine. Finally deciding it was time to hang it up, in 1983 "Uncle Forry" resigned from the magazine he helped bring to life a quarter century earlier. **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** lasted only one issue without him.

Nearly two years after leaving **FAMOUS MONSTERS** Forry launched **MONSTERLAND**, with scream queen Brinke Stevens quickly coming on board as the magazine's mascot. Unfortunately the book had a low-budget look to it and, for some reason, seemed to lack the childhood charm of **FM**. As a result, many **FAMOUS MONSTERS** fans found more appeal to **FILMFAX** when it appeared the following year. Created by the minds behind **FANTASTIC FILMS**, this new periodical covers the classics ala **FM**, but with the in-depth approach to articles and interviews found in such fare as **STARLOG**. **FILMFAX**'s attitude reflected the maturing tastes of earlier **FM** readers who had grown up and wanted more.

Fast-forward to the Spring of 1993. It had been 10 years since a new issue of **FAMOUS MONSTERS** had appeared on the stands, and 35 years since the magazine's debut. One rainy evening I decided to drop by a comic book shop just outside the city's historical district. As I walked past a wooden rack of magazines, I noticed an unfamiliar-looking issue of **FM** on display. Since I knew the shop carried back issues of comics and magazines, my first thought was this must have been an old issue I never had. Just as I had with **FM** #59 all those years ago, I slipped my discovery from behind other titles partially covering the cover to find that this was a new issue, **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** #200! Wait a minute...200? When **FM** stopped production a decade earlier, they hadn't made it to #199. Had 10 new issues really been released without my seeing any of them? As it turned out, I hadn't missed a thing. This latest issue wasn't the first time the magazine had jumped over a few numbers. In order to reach #100 more quickly during its original publication, the magazine skipped from issue #69 to #80 and explained that the 10 issues of **MONSTER WORLD** (one of **FM**'s sister publications) made up the missing copies of **FM**. (And there would be a slightly shorter leap, when the current incarnation followed issue #215 with #217.) In the years since **FM**'s reappearance, there has been occasional fan speculation that Forry's **MONSTERLAND** magazine accounts for the missing numbers between **FAMOUS MONSTERS** old and new. (However that doesn't quite work out, as there were 17 issues of **MONSTERLAND** published during its run.)

Math problems aside, **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** had been revived and revised. Forrest J Ackerman was back, lucked by photographer/publisher Ray Perry. Unlike its earlier incarnation, which not only covered the classics but also gave us sneak peeks at upcoming fright films, the new **FM** focused on the entertainment of yesteryear rather than hither with knife-wielding or mask-wearing maniacs. For



that group of Baby Boomers known as "Monster Kids," it seemed too good to be true. And, alas, it was. A falling out between Forry and Perry led to a series of legal battles over the magazine, the results of which are still hotly contested among fans and horror industry insiders alike. During the dispute the magazine went on hiatus after #235 appeared in 2001, not resuming publication again until #236 came off the presses in 2002.

Just over half a century after its debut in February of 1958, **FM** creeps toward issue #250 and its fate is still in debate. 2008 saw an alternate version of the title appearing online as a cyber-zine, independent of its print counterpart. The same year also saw the loss of **FM**'s founding father and driving force when editor Forrest J Ackerman died in December. While it's impossible to predict the future of **FM**, it's past was a pivotal part of pulp culture, inspiring the careers of such eerie alumni as Rick Baker, Tim Burton, Joe Dante, Peter Jackson, Stephen King and Steven Spielberg, as well as paving the way for publications such as the one you now hold in your hands. Perhaps the best way to say anything about **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** would be to borrow one of Forry's own puns: "*Fangs for the memories!*"

Scare-reviews

by David Alex Nahmod

FORRY:

My Own Observations of a Gentleman

Ouring my 1960s youth, **FAMOUS MONSTERS** was my favorite magazine, and **DARK SHADOWS** was my favorite TV show. In my mind, the two were intertwined: I discovered **DARK SHADOWS** in the Fall of 1967 and began reading **FM** because of it. Because of **FM** I began watching the Universal classics on TV and running to see the latest Hammer films at the Mayfair, Marboro and Camarsie Theatres in my native Brooklyn, New York.

I grew up in the same neighborhood that became famous in the film **SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER**: these were mean streets indeed! If you were a male who watched **DARK SHADOWS**, which was a daytime soap, then your "manhood" was questioned. I'm sorry to recall that I was taunted many times because of this strange, Gothic horror show that I dearly loved, and still love.

It was in the pages of **FAMOUS MONSTERS**, edited by Forrest Ackerman, where I first saw **DARK SHADOWS** treated with respect. Uncle Forry put Jonathan Frid's Barnabas on the cover of issues 52 and 59. In 1970 and 1971, the **DS** movies were also awarded **FM** cover stories.

Forry, bless your heart, didn't make fun of **DARK SHADOWS**. He recognized it for what it was: a grand horror show that created many new Monster Kids. He accorded it the same respect that he gave to the classics of Karloff, Lugosi and the Channeys.

To me that was the main thing that made Forry such a beloved icon: he embraced all things horror without judgment. He encouraged us kids to live our dreams and enjoy that which gave us pleasure. Whether if it was a Karloff film, an Ed Wood film, or **DARK SHADOWS**, if you enjoyed it, it was OK with Forry. No one was ever put down for what they liked.

In 1993, I wrote a letter to Forry when **FAMOUS MONSTERS** was revived. Then 37 years old, I told him how against the horror genre my parents had been, how watching every film and TV episode was a battle. I did not know Forry and had never met him up to that point. But he called me personally, to tell me how moved he was by my letter and how sorry he was that my parents wouldn't let me enjoy myself.

Editing the magazine, and everything else he did wasn't a job to Forry: he loved it all, and he loved all of us. The day he left us was a sad day indeed.

Hale and Farewell, Sir.

AMERICAN SCARY A Tribute to the Golden Age of the Horror Hosts (2008)

(Cinema Libre Studios)

AMERICAN SCARY could be considered a companion DVD to the magazine you're holding in our hand. Like **SCARY MONSTERS**, it celebrates and glorifies the wonderful TV horror hosts of days gone by.

It's hard to believe now, but once upon a time, local TV stations didn't run 5 hour news shows and sleazy talk shows. Classic film of all kinds, classic TV, and lots of other fun stuff were the order of the day. Just about every big city had a weekly, hosted horror movie.

It all began in 1954, when a struggling actress suddenly became a media sensation: Mailla Nurmi's **VAMPIRA** set the standard, and the bar was never higher. Though a locally aired show (KABC in

Hollywood), **Vampira** became a national celebrity. Hers was the highest rated show on Channel Seven—at the end of the first season, **TIME** magazine named her and James Cagney as Entertainers of the Year. To this day, her cancellation the following year remains an unsolved mystery.

In an interview filmed shortly before her recent passing, Nurmi explains how she developed the character. Though she wasn't a horror fan, she was a serious actress, a lover of film, theatre and the arts. She brought this sensibility to her signature role, and set out to present **Vampira** as a madwoman who really believed in herself.

"She was part Norma Desmond, part Dostoyevsky," the actress explains with a proud smile.

AMERICAN SCARY goes on to document the history of the TV horror host. The film is an invaluable history lesson: more than two dozen performers from various cities share their memories, with surviving film clips. Many of them recall the great fun they had.

It's pointed out back in the day, there was no VHS, DVD, cable or TiVo. The hosts knew of each other, but had no way to watch each other's shows, yet their formats were all similar: B movies and lots of ghoulish humor. It was a format that worked, and they all knew it.

One fan, now an actor, recalls watching **PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE**, a "really awful film," as he puts it. But the host segments were just as cheesy! "It was an embarrassment of riches," he says with a laugh!

All kinds of interesting bits of info crop up: film historian Don Glut harkens back to his Chicago childhood to a weekly 1950 show on WENR-TV, a station that went dark in the mid-1950s. Glut may be the only living person who remembers WENR's **MURDER AT MIDNIGHT**, but it sure scared the young tyke!

San Francisco's recently deceased Bob Wilkins, and the still active John Stanley are remembered for the wildly popular **CREATURE FEATURES** on KTVU. Bob and John were a rarity: they appeared as themselves and discussed the history of horror films during their host segments. It wasn't unusual for people like Vincent Price, Christopher Lee, or cast members from **STAR TREK** and **DARK SHADOWS** to drop by for interviews. For many viewers, **CREATURE FEATURES** was an education.

From **Vampira** to Elvira and beyond (the recent Penny Dreadful's **SHILLING SHOCKERS** has developed quite a following), **AMERICAN SCARY** covers it all with wit and reverence.

BRAVO!!!

DARK SHADOWS: SHOCK IT 2 ME! CASTRO THEATRE EVENT (2008)

(J.T. Video)

Lifelong **DARK SHADOWS** fan Joe Intaglia offers this filmed record of an important **DARK SHADOWS** event that took place at San Francisco's historic Castro Theatre in October 2008.



The theatre's annual **SHOCK IT 2 ME!** horror marathon featured a tribute to the classic scary soap. Newly struck, 35mm prints of the films **HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS** (1970) and **NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS** (1971) were shown on the Castro's giant screen. DS stars Kathryn Leigh Scott and Lara Parker appeared on stage for a 40 minute interview in between the features. Their interviewer was none other than former **CREATURE FEATURES** host John Stanley (see previous review) who is also a film critic for the **SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE** and a published author.

The Castro Theatre opened in 1922, and it's still a fully intact single screen house with almost 2,000 seats! Classic films and film festivals are the theatre's usual fare. About 800-900 people showed up for the DS event.

Integria's camera captures Scott and Parker signing autographs and chatting with fans. Their 40 minute interview with Stanley is seen in its entirety. The camera work is steady, the picture and sound are sharp. DS fans would enjoy and cherish this record of a one time event.

Integria's disc includes **SHOCK IT 2 ME's** trailer for their 2008 event.

DARK SHADOWS: SHOCK IT 2 ME! CASTRO THEATRE EVENT is available solely through Joe Integria. Email him at: jaytrevidio@yahoo.com. And please note: he has other **DARK SHADOW** events on DVD that you can ask him about. All events available on VHS as well.

LEMORA: A CHILD'S TALE OF THE SUPERNATURAL (1973)

(Synapse Films)

This chilling, no budget masterpiece disappeared quickly upon its initial release and was largely forgotten. Now on DVD, it's gaining a well deserved following.

Shot for peanuts with a semiprofessional cast, this is one spooky movie! Set in the Deep South in the 1930s, it tells the tale of 13 year old Lila (Cheryl Smith) a runaway who's looking for her missing father. She finds him in a spooky old mansion where Lemora, a creepy lady in a Victorian dress, "adopts" children and turns them into vampires!

LEMORA is an unnerving film that shows what a talented filmmaker can do with limited resources. Though the acting isn't

the best, the film's otherworldly atmosphere is terrifying. It's a shame that director Richard Blackham (who also plays the **PREACHER**) never got to make another film.

Hard to find, but well worth checking out! It's at Amazon.

MIRRORS (2008)

(20th Century Fox)

24's Kiefer Sutherland stars in this scary thriller rde, and American remake of a Korean film. The star is very good as a disgraced, alcoholic cop who's now working in a deserted, burnt out department store as a security guard.

I can't imagine who would have shopped at this store even before that fire: in every scene, the décor invokes Bela Lugosi ghiding down the stairs of Castle Dracula! When the ghosts start appearing in the

store mirrors, our hero uncovers a dark secret from 50 years past, when the store was a mental hospital.

MIRRORS is a well done ghost story with a strong cast. Though there's some unneeded, excessive gore, it's still a good film that deserves to find a larger audience.

Boo!

RED MIST (2007)

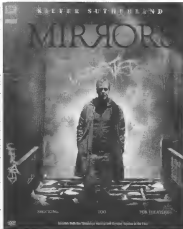
(Anchor Bay Entertainment)

Shot in Belfast, Northern Ireland with a largely British cast, this chiller is inexplicably set in an unnamed American suburb. Though not terribly scary, it's a reasonably well made story about a young man who ends up in a coma after a vicious college prank goes horribly wrong.

He's injected with an experimental drug meant to revive him, which instead gives him the power to leave his still comatose body and kill those who wronged him.

RED MIST suffers the fate of many recent horror films: the body count is so high and the characters are so obnoxious that there's nothing to root for and no one to relate to. The film's many deaths are so ridiculously violent that the film becomes somewhat laughable, if not disgusting.

A shame: as director Paddy Breathnach obviously knows how to set the stage. There's a lot of good potential here, but **RED MIST** misses the mark.



SCARY DVD HEADLINE GRUES

The latest DVD releases from major studios and smaller independent outfits

by Ron Adams

This might be the quietest few months we've had as far as classic monster movie releases on DVD. Large companies seem to be focusing on big selling mainstream products, while special markets like classic horror films have been scaled back. Hopefully, this will be temporary.

There are some bright spots in the future. Keep your eyeballs peeled (ouch, ouch, ouch!) for a re-release of **THE WOLF MAN** (1941) by Universal in July. Naturally its release is fueled by a modern **WOLF MAN** feature hitting theatres for the summer. The new special edition of **THE WOLF MAN** will feature a fresh biographical documentary on Lon Chaney Jr.

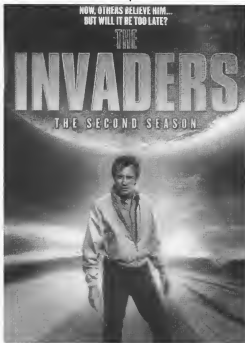
THE H-MAN, a Japanese bloh-movie (a favorite suh-suh genre!) will be making its way to DVD in 2009. Also on the horizon is the post nuclear, quiet art film **GLEN AND RANDA** about two teenagers searching for an Eldorado. A remastered widescreen version of **NIGHTMARE CASTLE** is on the way. Plus, Alpha DVD is doing **TRILBY** (a silent Svengali film from 1915) and **ISLAND OF LOST WOMEN** (1959).

Now here's what's out there now at your favorite monster movie retailer:

THE CULT FILMS OF ROGER CORMAN (DVD Collection) A ten movie set of Roger Corman productions! The set included the feature films: **THE TERROR**, **A BUCKET OF BLOOD**, **LAST WOMAN ON EARTH**, **ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES**, **SKI TROOP ATTACK**, **CREATURE FROM HAUNTED SEA**, **THE WASP WOMAN**, **THE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**, **NIGHT OF THE BLOOD BEAST**, and **SHE GODS OF SHARK REEF**. (BCI) **CURTAIN AT EIGHT** (1933) Stars C. Aubrey Smith, Paul Cavanagh, and Russell Hopton. A unlikely stage star is murdered. It's up to Detective Smith to solve the crime before a wise-cracking newspaper reporter does. (Alpha DVD)

DARK DREAMERS (4 DVD Interview Set) 30 years of interviews! Over 600 minutes of insight and interviews with the creative dreamers of imaginative hooks, movies, and special projects. The horror and sci-fi guys and gals are all here. Interviews include Forrest J Ackerman, Richard Matheson, John Saxon, Harlan Ellison, Tony Randel, William F. Nolan, Gahan Wilson, Peter Strauh, Clive Barker...on and on. If you can't make it to the horror conventions...this will get you up to speed! (Alpha DVD)

DEAD OF NIGHT (1977) Dan Curtis produced this three story feature. It's the companion film to **TRILOGY OF TERROR** (which also had three short stories). This one features some very cool tales from the typewriter of Richard (TWILIGHT ZONE) Matheson. A vampire in a castle, and old car that take a man...hack, and a woman that wishes her child...alive again. The stories are "No Such Thing as a Vampire," "Second Chance," and "Bobby." A great cast of actors including Elisha Cook, Jr.; Ed Beglye, Jr.; Lee



Montgomery and Patrick Macnee. (MPI)

FLASH GORDON COLLECTION A five DVD set! Includes the complete **FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE** (1940) serial. Ten rare episodes of the **FLASH GORDON** TV series. Bonus movie: **MANHUNT IN SPACE** (1956). Get Flash today and save the universe. (Passport)

THE INVADERS (Classic TV Second Season) David Vincent (Roy Thinnes) knows that The Invaders, alien beings from a dying planet, have arrived to take over the Earth! To make matter worse, the aliens know who he is, and most of the time where he is. Somehow he must convince a disbelieving world that the nightmare has already begun. Runtime: 22 Hr. 16 Min. The complete second season from 1967-68. (Paramount)

LIGHTS OUT—Volume 6 (Classic TV) Classic chiller TV from the early days of broadcasting. This collection features 4 terror tales that star Otto Kruger, Robert Stack, Patrick Knowles, and others. (Alpha)

THE MASK (1961) Stars Paul Stevens and Claudette Nevins. A cursed tribal mask causes the wearer to have hallucinations that would make H.P. Lovecraft pretty uneasy. Besides the hallucinations, it makes you brutally kill people. And if that

weren't enough, it has an addictive quality, so you want to watch it again and again—even though you know it's bound to get you in some pretty bad trouble. Eerie stuff from Canada. Filmed originally in 3-D. Listen for the voice in your head... "Put the mask on!" This DVD includes 1 pair of 3-D glasses and the film has a few dream 3-D sequences. (Cheezy Flicks)

THE MISSING CORPSE (1945) Stars J. Edward Bromberg, Frank Jenks, and Ben Weldon. A body of a newspaper man is shifted from place to place by the competing newspaper's editor, so he won't be implicated in the murder. A light, black comedy from the 1940s. (Alpha)

MONSTER BASH 2008 Guest stars include: Don Sullivan, Pat Priest, Lisa Loring, Elizabeth Shepherd, Charles Herbert, Donna Douglas, Bert I. Gordon and more! Join Tom, Chuck and Uncle Ira in catching all the stars, guest, and events of MONSTER BASH 2008. You'll be on the edge of your seat as Tom recollects his frightening visit to the eerie Loren mansion...and whatever made Uncle Ira into a knife-wielding maniac? The video's conclusion will thrill you as the boys flee the BASH just ahead of the Giant Gila Monster! Another Cleveburg Production triumph! (Creepy Classics)

THE NEW INVISIBLE MAN/ISLAND OF DINOSAURS—Double Feature In Spanish with English subtitles. Mexi-Monster Double Creature Feature. You have the Mexican version of THE INVISIBLE MAN and THE LOST WORLD. South-of-the-Border monster party time! **THE NEW INVISIBLE MAN** (1958) Stars Seturo de Cordova, Ana Luisa Peluffo and Augusto Benedico. A man is wrongly accused of killing a man. He is sentenced to life imprisonment and is slipped some invisibility serum to help him escape and prove his innocence. Unfortunately, the serum drives him bonkers and he begins terrorizing the community. Very similar in plot to THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS from Universal. **ISLAND OF DINOSAURS** (1967) Mexican take on THE LOST WORLD theme with scientists discovering a world of cavemen (and women!) living with giant beast of the past. A semi-remake of ONE MILLION B.C. Written by Mexican monster movie legend Abel Salazar. (BCT)

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE Season I (TV Anthology) I can remember always being entertained by this TV anthology show from a few decades back. A low budget show that rose above...similar to the great Amicus movie anthologies. Over 530 minutes of terror with a whose-who of guest stars. (Parrmaout)

WATCH MR. WIZARD (1950s Classic TV) Don Herbert is Mr. Wizard on TV. He's the Bill Nye of the 1950s...showing kids all kinds of cool science experiments. Plus, there's WINKY DINK AND ME, retro cartoons as a bonus. (Alpha) **WHITE ZOMBIE** (1932) Stars Bela Lugosi, Midge Bellamy, John Harron, Robert Fraser and Joseph Cawthorn. Bela in top-form, loaded with confidence (just coming off DRACULA) and sinking his teeth into the role of plantation/zombie owner. (Miracle)

Seek these latest releases out at your favorite store or, on-line at www.creepyclassics.com. Or, look for the CREEPY CLASSICS ad to mail ordering yours, in this issue of SCARY



MONSTERS! If you have questions, feel free to call me, (724) 238-4317 or e-mail creepyclassics@creepyclassics.com.

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(Monster) Bash Wishes,
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Dear SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE,

—(Continued from page 90)

Hi Dennis,

I just wanted to let you know you are doing a good job with SCARY MONSTERS and MONSTER MEMORIES. Thank you for the copy of your 2009 Yearbook. I clawed it cover to cover last night. I wanted to send you this photo of my son Spencer (now 16) at the HOUSE OF MONSTERS with Forrest J Ackerman. Forry is letting Spencer wear Bela's ring. He asked Spencer "So little boy, what is your favorite movie" and Spencer said, "Creature from the Black Lagoon" and all laughed including Dolores Fuller from PLAN 9. I will miss 4SJ greatly as he was the biggest part of my life since I was 9 years old (now 49).



Keep up the good work and look forward to your 70th Creature/Forry Tribute issue. Thanks!

MICHAEL CONLIN

Hi Dennis,

Upon my living room wall hangs a picture of Forrest J Ackerman which he autographed for me at the SON OF FAMOUS MONSTERS Convention in Los Angeles in 1995. In the photograph he is standing between Ray Bradbury and Ray Harryhausen and they are all smiling and they look very happy. The local art store that framed the picture labeled it "three old men" on my invoice. So, I explained to them who the "three old men" were, what they had done and how they would influence culture as long as there is anything such as culture. But I may as well have been preaching the gospel to a rock.

It was around 1960 when I found FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND. Not it is true to say if it had not been for this magazine I would never have known of the classic horror film. Truth is I may never have known. And when I became an adult and I was able to see those films THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, THE GOLEM, THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME I felt as if I were watching them for a second time because I had seen them before in my imagination in the pages of FAMOUS MONSTERS. Everyone who reads a genre magazine, everyone who buys them, everyone who loves them owes a debt to Forrest J Ackerman. When someone like me opens one of these magazines for the first time, Forrest J Ackerman is standing nearby, still smiling, still happy. Sincerely, GARY MARSHALL Pilot Mountain, NC

The closest I got to Forry Ackerman was through a write-in offer in FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND for a free autographed postcard. It took forever to get mine and wasn't the same image pictured in the magazine. I still have the card somewhere in my collection. That made me realize how much this man truly cared about his fans. The same sentiments were on display again when MONSTERLAND magazine hit the newsstands. Maybe soon we'll have the honor of visiting a gravesite replete with a headstone in Espemato!

A college friend of mine once bought a pair of eye-glass frames just like Forry's. He had to go over to the women's section to get them! Unfortunately, he got so laughed at he was forced to give them up. I guess Ackerman was the only one to get away with them. They really made him look like a Sci-Fi guy.

TIM LYNCH S. Windsor, CT



Hi Dennis—

Scary Terry posted over at the Universal Monster Army, requesting submissions for SM's upcoming tribute issue and I thought I'd send the attached artwork. It's a sketch I made on my graphics tablet the moment I heard our beloved Uncle 4E



had passed on. I posted it on the UMA forum but have been asked to submit it to you as well.

LOVE SCARY MONSTERS mag!
MIKE CATHCART Branson, MO

Hi Dennis:

Here are my reminiscences of Forry:

Forry has been a part of my life since February 1961. My Mom and I were at one of the many Candy Stores near my house. My Mom, in a particularly generous mood, told me to pick any magazine on the shelf. I immediately spotted FAMOUS MONSTERS #11, the one with GORGON on the cover. I pointed to the issue and said "I want that one." This was the beginning of my relationship with Forry and FAMOUS MONSTERS.

Growing up in New York City, there were 5 Candy Stores that sold magazines. I never had a problem getting the latest issue

of FM. In fact, I was fortunate to have my request for a picture printed in the **YOU AXED FOR IT** section in issue #26.

I first met Forry in 1974. He was with James Warren. When I asked to see Bela Lugosi's ring, he happily complied. When I mentioned that I was a FM reader since number 11 and loved horror films, Forry's eyes lit up. We talked about Karloff, Lugosi, and a host of other topics for a while. He was everything I expected—warm and friendly.

My daughter, when she was young, would not let people she did not know come near her. When she met Forry, she walked up to him and held his hand. Forry would always take the time to talk to her. She said to me that "Forry is nice." This was a tribute to Forry's natural gentleness.

One of the greatest moments of my life was going to the Ackermansion in 2001. My wife asked me if we should go on vacation to England or California. Without hesitation, I said California. I told her that this was the time to see the Ackermansion while Forry was still in good health. I went with Buddy Barnett, the editor of **CULT MOVIES**. (See the picture of myself, Forry, and Buddy below) I had been waiting



almost 40 years to go and told Forry so. He was touched and said, "What took you so long?" It was worth the wait. Coincidentally, that was the final summer that Forry had the Ackermansion. He closed in the following January.

Every time I met Forry through the years, he always gave me a big hello and asked about my daughter. He has influenced my life in ways he never could have imagined. My love of horror films has guided me throughout the years and I have Forry to thank for this.

He was a wonderful man and will be greatly missed.

BRUCE TINKEL

Well, since **SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE** is doing a tribute to Dr. Acula, I thought I would send in my contribution.

I got to meet Uncle Forry at **G-FEST** (Godzilla convention) held in Los Angeles back around '99 or 2000 (can't remember which, but it was the first one they had held in L.A. moving it for year from Chicago to the coast). I remember I got to ask him about his bit part as Dr. Beaumont in one of my all-time favorite low budget monster films, **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN**. Later as I was passing his table, I put my hand on his shoulder and bent down and told him, "You ARE

FAMOUS MONSTERS, and without you it isn't the real thing" (this was during that dreadful mess when he had to take a certain someone to court over just who owned the rights to **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND** and Uncle Forry's famous "Dr. Acula" pseudonym). I remember he looked up at me and smiled a big smile and said, "Thank You."

Later during the convention, I was standing talking to one of the dealers, and Uncle Forry walked up and started looking at some of the vinyl kaiju figures. He was so like a little kid, very excited to be at the convention, and very honored to win the Mangled Skyscraper award that year. The three of us were talking, and it was jokingly suggested that some company produce a Forrest J Ackerman figure, because he had so many fans that it really would be a best seller. He loved the idea! He really was such a sweet, kind man, and as a kid it was Uncle Forry that introduced me to the wonderful world of classic monster films. I do hope someone makes that figure of him, although we don't need a Dr. Acula toy to keep the memory of Uncle Forry in our hearts. He will dwell there with Karloff, Lugosi, Lorré, Price, Chaney, and Cushing forevermore.

MICHAEL SIMMONS (aka Brother D)



Wow! A lot of you joined in the celebration of Forry's life by sending in your **DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN** correct answers. The photo was actually from a deleted scene never seen in the movie. Here's all the now famous scary monsters who send in their correct answers and became part of the **Forrest J Ackerman Tribute**—Bob Statzer of Richmond, IN; Doug Ferrini of Downers Grove, IL; Dr. Swave; Paul Donarski of Green Bay, WI; Brian Allen; Jim Verhagen of Watervliet, NY; Christian Samuel of Acworth, GA; Ken McClelland of Reston, VA; Wild Bill Komparada of Saint Charles, IL; Timothy Walters of Muskogee, OK; Chris DeLuca of Baldwin, NY; Freddie Poe; Debbie Painter; Ian Bauer of Convoys, OH; Jon Fry of Circleville, OH; Michael Aguilar of Coolidge, AZ; Thomas Jaszczewski of Vandergrift, PA; John Jenkins Jr. of Hammond, IN; Randy Jamison of Bakersfield, CA; Lawrence Lotfin of West Monroe, LA; Creepy Kevin Rose of Clinton, IA; David Kublin of Delray Beach, FL; Richard Lamphear of Lisbon, NH; Jonathan Jordan of Bessemer City, NC; Pamela Caron of Portland, OR; Kevin Joy of Newburgh, NY; Chuck Thiel of Carsonville, MI; Robert Martin of Brooklyn, NY; Michael Dodd of Cleveland, TN; Paul Abasi of Fitchburg, MA; Nick Gibson of Coldwater, MI; Brian Kallenberg of Petersburg, MI; David Ducey of Eldred, PA; Mark Hadzega of Middlebury, CT; James Parady of Old Town, ME; Gary Alan Duncan of Aberdeen, MD; Don Hensel of Riverside, CA; Ken Archer of Bangor, ME; Russell Krick of Convoys, OH; William Ted Richardson of Newport, NC; Anthony Oddi of Watertown, NY; Homer Dunlap of Charlotte, NC; Gary Marshall of Pilot Mountain, NC; Derek M. Koch of Mail Order Zombie; Jeff A Kurta of Bessemer, MI and Marvin Leeper of Atoka, OK. Now here's this

Scary Issue's SCARY SECRET PHOTO???

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The After ACKER-WORD!



I really hope you enjoyed this *Very Scary Special Tribute Issue*. Several regular features didn't make it into this issue like SCARE-NEWS, THE COSMIC DRIVE-IN and a new DESTINY VAMPIRE MERMAID one-shot story. They will be included in issue #71. Some great MONSTER MEMORIES Forry-filled articles as well as some other great Forry Tributes were pushed out of this issue because we simply ran out of pages and actually dug into some of our ad space pages just to get a few more articles in. So, we shall continue to celebrate Forry's life in our next issue. If you missed our deadline last time there are no ACK-cuses this time around, just feel free to send your memories, Forry tribute articles, drawings and photos and we will continue to run them.

Don't forget to stimulate the *Scary economy* and purchase some scary stuff from our *Scary Advertisers* and our mail order ads and make this the year you subscribe to a *Real Monster Magazine* (read more about this on one of the following pages)! Send in your Scaremail and let us know how you liked the SCARY 70th TRIBUTE Issue from the *Blacky Lagoon*!

Thanks for joining us this time around!

Dennis J. Druktenis

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The 50th Anniversary celebration of pioneering monster magazines continues with this Limited Edition release of the complete collection of MONSTERS and THINGS. Both MONSTERS and THINGS #1 from January 1959 and issue #2 from April 1959 are collected in this one volume. This volume sports a full color heavy laminated cover, square binding and heavy white paper interior to preserve these almost lost putrid pulp memories. Own this piece of monster magazine history for 50% off cover but you must add \$6.00 for shipping! For a limited time this 100 page book/magazine is available for only \$15.00 plus \$6.00 shipping for this one item! That's Only \$21.00 postpaid in the U.S. This offer expires on May, 15th, 2009 and the price goes up to \$20 plus shipping.

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Presents...



SCARY MONSTERS Magazine Presents...A **SHOCK!-ING** Scarelection Volume 1. Features a reprint of the entire contents of the rare **SHOCK!** promotional book. **HORROR MONSTERS** Shock reprints, new material and much more in the SCARY book format. Only 200 printed. Only \$25.00 postpaid in the U.S.

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SCARY 70TH TRIBUTE ISSUE FROM THE BLACKY LAGOON! 118 SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE A Real Monster Magazine!

Just In! SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE No. 2 !

The latest issue of the new SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE has arrived with lots of Mummies. This issue also features Forrest J Ackerman's last CRIMSON CHRONICLES column which is probably his last written work. "DEATH! ETERNAL PUNISHMENT TO ANYONE WHO" doesn't purchase SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE #2 for Only \$8.95 plus shipping!

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Premiere Issue! Limited Collector's Edition! SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE No. 1 !

Back In Stock!

We SOLD OUT of this issue before this ad even made it into SCARY MONSTERS #68 but now have some copies back in stock! Don't delay!

The Premiere Issue of SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE debuted at MONSTER BASH 2008 as a Limited Collector's Edition. And...this is one of the few places that you can purchase SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE No. 1 while our limited supply lasts for Only \$10.00 each plus shipping.

We still have a few copies of the original SCARLET STREET magazine still in stock:

SCARLET STREET #14, 22, 26 \$5.95 each #28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 38, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52 \$7.95 each #53 \$8.95

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Just In! VAN HELSING'S JOURNAL Number 10 !

From some of the same people who bring you SCARLET THE FILM MAGAZINE comes the tenth issue of VAN HELSING'S JOURNAL. BELA IN BRITAIN, MEXICAN MUMMIES, THE MANY FACES OF CARMILLA and more will greet you in this issue. Open up the World Fantastica in VAN HELSING'S JOURNAL Number 10 for only \$8.95 plus shipping!

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Just In! THE HOUSE THAT HAMMER BUILT #23 and back issues!

The latest issue has arrived from the United Kingdom of The Fanzine That Builds Into A Comprehensive Guide to Hammer's Fantasy Films! This issue features a Tribute to Hammer's First Screen Queen Hazel Court and much more! THE HOUSE THAT HAMMER BUILT Issue 23 can be delivered to your house for only \$14.00 plus shipping!

A few copies of the following back issues are still available! THE HOUSE THAT HAMMER BUILT #12 \$11.00 #13, 14, 17, 20 \$12.00 each #21 \$14.00

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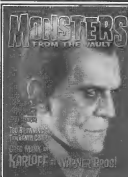


Just In! LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #22

Another issue of LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS has just arrived! You'll SCREAM and SCREAM again as you read *The Uncensored History of Amicus Productions in LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #20* and visit HAMMER'S FIRST HORROR THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and much more in LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #21 and meet the modern day Hammer Dracula in LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS #22 for Only \$8.95 each plus shipping!

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Just In! MONSTERS FROM THE VAULT #26!

The latest issue of MONSTERS FROM THE VAULT is now available. Karioff is still King and classic horror still lives in MONSTERS FROM THE VAULT #26 for \$8.98 plus shipping today!

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Silver Scream Legends Series Bela Lugosi magazine!

Lugosi still lives up on the Silver Screen and in this digest sized Silver Scream Legends magazine from Australia that was published in 1992. This mainly pictorial magazine features many full color poster images and lots of black and white stills. Celebrate Bela's Silver Scream career in Silver Scream Legends Series Bela Lugosi for Only \$8.00 plus shipping!

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Scary Sale! THE FILMS OF LON CHANEY book!

This hardcover dust-jacketed book from 1998 contains the most complete filmography of Lon Chaney films and more complete with 120 photos! Well-worth the original \$35 original price but now offered at a Scary Sale price of over 55% off cover! Learn all about THE FILMS OF LON CHANEY by Michael F. Blake for Only \$15.00 plus shipping!

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SCARY 70TH TRIBUTE ISSUE FROM THE BLACKY LAGOON! 120 SCARY MONSTERS MAGAZINE A Real Monster Magazine!

Just In! Scary Rock! GARAGE BAND HALLOWEEN CD!

It's time to go Boppin' At The Black Lagoon with THE SHADOWS OF KNIGHT along with 9 other "Garage Bands" and celebrate Scary Monsters and Halloween all year long! Other scary songs include: Baby Godzilla, Only The Dead Know Brooklyn, Helios/You're A Creep, Sometimes I'm A Zombie, Darkworld, Season Of The Witch, Welcome To The Midnight Hour, A-Soalin' and The Ghoul I Love The Most. Scare and Rock to the GARAGE BAND HALLOWEEN Priceless Collection CD for the Scary Low Price of Only \$7.98 plus shipping!

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Just In! CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON HEADKNOCKER!

Speaking of "Boppin' At The Black Lagoon"... It's time to Bobble at the Black Lagoon with the CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON HEADKNOCKER for the Scary Low Price of \$16.98 plus shipping!

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Special Creature Issue! SCREAM MAGAZINE #17!

The latest issue of SCREAM MAGAZINE has just arrived and it is a Special Creature Issue and features two different front covers. Dive for both covers of SCREAM #17 for only \$15.90 for the set of two plus shipping! Or: Buy one copy for \$7.95 plus shipping! (You may choose a cover of your choice and we will try to honor your request but it depends on our supply of each at the time of your order!)

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MIDNIGHT MARQUEE MONSTERS Issue 62 Special 1950s Monsters Pictorial Edition!

This special issue 100 page magazine/ book from the Spring of 2000 is loaded with photos of all your favorite 1950s Sci-Fi Monsters. ALIEN INVASION and SAUCER THREATS, GLOP MONSTERS AND SLIMY CRITTERS and much more can be found in MIDNIGHT MARQUEE MONSTERS #62 at the Special Scary Low Price of Only \$6.00 (original retail price was \$10.00) plus shipping!

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KOLCHAK tales ANNUAL #1

featuring **DARK SHADOWS' Barnabas Collins**

What else can we say...what a monstrous match-up! Kolchak: The Night Stalker meets up with Barnabas Collins in this special giant comic book! KOLCHAK tales ANNUAL #1 features a cover A and a cover B cover devoted to the two different stories contained inside. Get the complete set of two comics for \$13.00 plus shipping or purchase one copy for \$6.50 plus shipping! (You may choose a cover of your choice and we will try to honor your request but it depends on our supply of each at the time of your order!)

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Just In! ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES Vol. 2!

Volume two of the ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES featuring issue 11-20 is now available! STRANGE TALES OF STARTLING SUSPENSE! You don't have to go on a witch hunt or spend thousands of dollars trying to find these startling 10¢ comics. They have been collected in this MARVEL MASTERWORKS edition of ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES Vol. 2 for Only \$59.99 plus shipping!

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Just In! ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY Vol. 1 !

The first 10 issues of JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY are collected into this newest volume of MARVEL MASTERWORKS. Don't scream if you miss it and don't grab this latest mysterious volume! Begin your journey now with MARVEL MASTERWORKS ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY Vol. 1 for only \$59.99 plus shipping!

A Few Still Available! MARVEL MASTERWORKS ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE Vol. 2 for only \$59.99 plus shipping!

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Just In! CREEPY ARCHIVES VOLUME TWO!

The second CREEPY volume is here! CREEPY ARCHIVES VOLUME TWO collects the complete contents of issues #6-10 of Warren's CREEPY magazine for the Scary Low Price of \$49.95 plus shipping!

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A Few Left! CREEPY ARCHIVES VOLUME ONE!

There is no need to unearth your moldy issues anymore to reread or find moldy issues for your collection. The collection that you can read and reread begins right here with the CREEPY ARCHIVES VOLUME ONE for only \$49.95 plus shipping!

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Just In! **EERIE ARCHIVES VOLUME ONE!**

EERIE now gets the archives treatment as the first five frightful issues are presented. And Forrest J Ackerman provides the introduction to this first volume! In the words of Cousin Eerie, "Foul Fiendies and Groovy Ghoulies, gather round for a shock session so scary, you'll lose your head!" You can let the eerie scares begin with the EERIE ARCHIVES VOLUME ONE for **Only \$49.99 plus shipping!**

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ALL-NEW! **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** NO. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10!



NO. 10 of the ALL-NEW TALES FROM THE CRYPT bi-monthly series just arrived at our tomb! THE CRYPT-KEEPER, THE OLD



WITCH, and THE VAULT-KEEPER proudly present the ALL-NEW...TALES FROM THE CRYPT NO. 2, NO. 3, NO. 4, NO. 5, NO. 6, NO. 7, NO. 8 (Two different covers, we will try to honor your request), NO. 9 and NO. 10 for only **\$3.95 each plus shipping!**



Get the complete set of both covers to #8 for only \$7.90 for the set of 2 plus shipping!

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FREAKY COLLECTORS EDITION! **FREAKY #1!**

From the new publisher of FAMOUS MONSTERS comes perhaps their answer to CREEPY and EERIE magazines. The glossy pages of this magazine-sized magazine features reprints of pre-code horror comics in black and white along with a few one-page horror fiction stories. We only have a few copies of this hard-to-find STRANGE, EERIE, TERRIFYING magazine. Get the COLLECTOR'S EDITION! FREAKY #1 for the Scary

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FANEX FILES Samuel Z. Arkoff DVD!

The incredible story of the founder of American International Pictures is told in this documentary. This talk was filmed at the FANEX Classic FilmFest in 2000. Well known writers as well as Roger Corman join in to participate in this must-see documentary and you'll thrill to film clips from some of your favorite A.I.P. films.

Be one of the first monsters on your block to get FANEX FILES Samuel Z. Arkoff on DVD for Only \$9.98 plus shipping!

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VAMPIRA The Movie!

THE SHOCKING TRUTH ABOUT HORROR'S FIRST HOST can be found in this new documentary. This new DVD features Milla "Vampira" Nurmi, Forrest J Ackerman, Svengoolie, Zacherley, Penny Dreadful, Cassandra "Elvira" Peterson and many more along with rare footage and even special features. Find out the Shocking Truth today in VAMPIRA The Movie on DVD at the Scary Low Price of \$9.98 (retail price is \$14.98) plus shipping!

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Just In! KREATING KARLOFF DVD !

You read about KREATING KARLOFF way back in SCARY MONSTERS #61 and now it is finally available on DVD! KREATING KARLOFF is about re-creating Karloff characters and is also a tribute to his films as scenes from FRANKENSTEIN and THE MUMMY are recreated right before your eyes. This DVD release is loaded with Bonus Material including a Karloff Souvenir Booklet, several short films, a Frankenstein music video and much more! You'll find out about One Man's Quest to Resurrect The King Of Horror in KREATING KARLOFF for only \$9.98 plus shipping!

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GIANT FRANKENSTEIN PEZ!

You've been reading about this GIANT PEZ for over a year now and finally you can actually purchase one for your own lab. GIANT FRANKENSTEIN is over 12 inches tall, comes with 12 packages of PEZ candy and makes noise and lights up! Get the GIANT FRANKENSTEIN PEZ for the Scary Low Price of \$24.98 plus shipping!

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The latest double feature volumes of classic THE SPIDER pulp reprints are now available! THE SPIDER MASTER OF MEN! PULP DOUBLES #8 featuring SATAN'S SIGHTLESS LEGION & WINGS OF THE BLACK DEATH; PULP DOUBLES #9 featuring THE SPIDER STRIKES & SATAN'S WORKSHOP and PULP DOUBLES #10 featuring THE CORPSE CARGO and SLAVES OF THE RING are only \$14.95 each plus shipping!

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SCARY 2009 SALE!

It has been over a year since we've been able to offer vintage monster magazines in quantity to you our valued Scary Readers at Scary Sale prices. We're almost out of everything but found a few things still in our scarehouse and acquired some new additions but this may be the last time. The average condition of the magazines are VG-F or better and are all unread warehouse copies. We will always send you the best possible copy at the time of your order but ORDER NOW for the best possible selection and condition.



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CoF #21 1974

CoF #22 1974

1969 YEARBOOK

#34 August 1965

#36 December 1965

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#9 June 1977



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#22 July 1978



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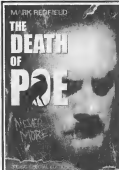
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